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A
JOVIAL CREW:
OR,
THE MERRY BEGGARS.

Presented in a

COMEDIE,

AT

The Cock-pit in Drury-Lane, in
the year 1641.

Written by

RICHARD BROME.

Mart. Hic totus volorideat Libellus.



LONDON:

Printed by J. T. for E. D. and N. E. and are to be
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NOVEMBER 1874

OR

THE NEW YORK

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To the Right Noble, Ingenious, and
Judicious Gentleman,
THOMAS STANLEY, Esq;

SIR,

I Have, long since, studied in these anti-ingenious Times, to finde out a Man, that might, at once, be both a Judge and Patron to this Issue of my Old age, which needs both. And my blessed Stars have flung me upon You : In whom both those Attributes concentre and flourish : Nor can I yet finde a reason, why I should present it to You (it being below your Acceptance or Censure) but onely my own Confidence ; which had not grown to this forwardnesse, had it not been encouraged by your Goodnesse. Yet we all know, Beggars use to flock to great mens Gates. And, though my Fortune has cast me in that Mold, I am poor and proud ; and preserve the humour of him, who could not beg for any thing, but great Boons, such, as are your kinde Acceptance and Protection. I dare not say (as my Brethren use) that I present this, as a Testimoniall of my Gratitude or Recompence for your Favours : For (I protest) I conceive it so far from quitting old Engagements, that it creates new. So that, all, that this Play can do, is but to make more Work ; and involves me in Debts, beyond a possibility of Satisfaction. Sir, it were a folly in me, to tell you of your Worth, the World knows it enough ; and are bold to say, Fortune and Nature scarce ever club'd so well. You know, Sir, I am old, and cannot cringe, nor Court, with the powder'd

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

der'd and ribbanded Wits of our daies : But, though I cannot speak so much, I can think as well, and as honourably as the best. All the Arguments I can use to induce you to take notice of this thing of nothing, is, that it had the luck to tumble last of all in the Epidemicall ruine of the Scene ; and now limps hither with a wooden Leg, to beg an Alms at your hands. I will winde up all, with a Use of Exhortation, That since the Times conspire to make us all Beggars, let us make our selves merry ; which (if I am not mistaken) this drives at. Be pleased therefore, Sir, to lodge these harmlesse Beggars in the Out-houses of your thoughts ; and, among the rest, Him, that in this Cuckoe time, puts in for a Membership, and will fill the Choyre of those, that Duly and truly pray for you, and is,

S I R,

Your humble Servant

RIC: BROME.

To

To Master RICHARD BROME, on his Comedie
of *A Jovial Crew: or, The merry Beggars.*

Not to Commend, or Censure *thee*, or *thine* ;
Nor like a Bush, to signifie good *Wine* ;
Nor yet to publish to the World, or *Thee*,
Thou merit'st Bayes by Wit and *Poetry*,
Do I stand here. Though I do know, there comes
A Shole, with Regiments of *Encomiums*,
On all occasions, whose *Astronomie*
Can calculate a Praise to *Fifty three*,
And write blank Copies, such, as being view'd,
May serve indifferently each *Altitude* ;
And make Books, like Petitions, whose Commands
Are not from Worth, but multitude of Hands :
Those will prove Wit by Power, and make a Trade,
To force by number when they can't perswade.
Here's no such need : For *Books*, like Children, be
Well Christ'ned, when their Sureties are but three.
And those, which to twelve Godfathers do come,
Signifie former Guilt, or speedy Doom.

Nor need the *Stationer*, when all th'*Wits* are past,
Bring his own *Periwig Poetry* at last.
All this won't do : For, when their Labour's done,
The Reader's rul'd, not by their taste, but's own.
And he, that for *Encomiasticks* looks,
May finde the bigger, not the better *Books*.
So, that the most our *Leavers* serve for, shews
Opely that we're his Friends, and do suppose
Tis good : And that ~~is~~ *is all*, that I shall say.
In truth *I love him well*, and like his *Play*.
And if there's any, that don't think so too :
Let them let it alone for them, that do.

J. B.

To my Worthy Friend Master R I C A R D B R O M E,
on his excellent Play, called, *A Joviall Crew: or,*
The merry Beggars.

THere is a Faction (Friend) in Town, that cries,
Down with the *Dagon-Poet*, *Johnson* dies.
His Works were too elaborate, not fit
To come within the Verge, or face of *Wit*.
Beaumont and *Fletcher* (they say) perhaps, might
Passe (well) for currant Coin, in a dark night :
But *Shakespeare* the *Plebeian* Driller, was
Founder'd in's *Pericles*, and must not pass.
And so, at all men flie, that have but been
Thought worthy of Applause ; therefore, their spleen.
Ingratefull *Negro-kinde*, dart you your Rage
Against the Beams that warm'd you, and the Stage !
This malice, shews it is unhallowed heat,
That boyles your Raw-brains, and your Temples beat.
Adulterate Pieces may retain the Mold,
Or Stamp, but want the purenesse of the Gold.
But the World's mad, those Jewels that were worn
In high esteem, by some, laid by in scorn ;
Like *Indians*, who their Native Wealth despise,
And doat on Stranger's Trash, and Trumperies.
Yet, if it be not too far spent, there is
Some hopes left us, that this, thy well wrought Piece,
May bring it Cure, reduce it to its sight,
To judge th' difference 'twixt the Day, and Night ;
Draw th' Curtain of their Errours : that their sense
May be conformable to *Ben's* Influence ;
And finding here, *Nature* and *Art* agree,
May swear, thou liv'st in Him, and he in Thee.

Jo: Tatham.

To

*I love this Comedie, and every line,
Because 'tis good, as well's because 'tis thine.*

*Thou tell'st the World, the life that Beggars lead,
'Tis seasonable, 'twill become our Trade.*

*'T must be our study too; for in this time
Who'll not be innocent, since Wealth's a Crime?*

*Thou'rt th' Ages Doctor now; for since all go
To make us poor, thou mak'st us merry too.*

*Go on, and thrive; may all thy sportings be
Delightfull unto all, as th' are to me.*

*May this so please, t' encourage thee; that more
May be made publick, which thou keep'st in store.
That though we've lost their Dresse; we may be glad
To see and think on th' happinesse we had.*

*And thou thereby may'st make our Name to shine;
'Twas Royall once; but now 'twill be Divine.*

ALEX. BROME.

Prologue.



Prologue.

THe Title of our Play, *A Joviall Crew*,
May seem to promise Mirth: Which were a new,
And forc'd thing, in these sad and tragick daies,
For you to finde, or we expresse in Playes.
We wish you, then, would change that expectation,
Since Joviall Mirth is now grown out of fashion.
Or much not to expect: For, now it chanches,
(Our Comick Writer finding that Romances
Of Lovers, through much travell and distresse,
Till it be thought, no Power can redresse
Th' afflicted Wanderers, though stout Chevalry
Lend all his aid for their delivery;
Till, lastly, some impossibility
Concludes all strife, and makes a Comedie)
Finding (he saies) such Stories bear the sway,
Near as he could, he has compos'd a Play,
Of Fortune-tellers, Damsels, and their Squires,
Expos'd to strange Adventures, through the Briers
Of Love and Fate. But why need I forestall
What shall so soon be obvious to you all:
But wish the dulnesse may make no Man sleep,
Nor sadnesse of it any Woman weep.

The

The Persons of the Play.

Old-rents, an ancient Esquire.
Hearty, his Friend, and merry Companion, but
 a decay'd Gentleman.

Springlove, Steward to Master *Oldrents*.

Vincent,
Hilliard, } two young Gentlemen.

Randall, a Groom, Servant to *Oldrents*.

Master *Sentwell*,
 and two other } Friends to Justice *Clack*,
 Gentlemen,

Oliver, the Justices Son.

Master *Clack*, the Justice himself.

Master *Talboy*, Lover to the Justices Neece.

Martin, the Justices Clerk.

Chaplain,
Usher,
Butler, } to *Oldrents*.

Cook, }

Rachel, } *Oldrent's* Daughters.

Meriel, }
Amie, Justice *Clack's* Neece.

Autum-Mort, an old Beggar-woman.

Patrico,
Souldier,
Lawyer,
Courtier, } Four especiall Beggars.

Scribble, their Poet.

Divers other Beggars, Fiddlers, and Mutes.

A JOVIAL CREW:

OR,

The merry Beggars.

Actus Primus.

Oldrems. Hearty.

Old. IT has indeed, Friend, much afflicted me.
Hea. And very justly, let me tell you, Sir,
That could so impiously be curious
Yo tempt a judgement on you; to give ear,
And Faith too (by your leave) to *Fortune-tellers,*
Wizards and Gipsies!

Old. I have since been frighted
With a thousand dreams!

Hea. I would be drunk
A thousand times to bed, rather than dream
Of any of their *Riddley Riddlems.*
If they prove happy so: If not, let 'em go;
You'll never find their meaning till the event,
If you suppose there was, at all, a meaning,
As the equivocating Devil had, when he
Cosen'd the Monk, to let him live soul-free,

LEA

B

Till

A Jovial Crew: or,

Till he should finde him sleeping between sheets :
The wary Monk, abjuring all such lodging,
At last, by over-watching in his study,
The foul Fiend took him napping with his nose
Betwixt the sheet-leaves of his conjuring Book.
There was the *whim*, or double meaning on't.
But these fond Fortune-tellers, that know nothing,
Aim to be thought more cunning then their Master,
The foresaid Devil, tho' truly not so hurtful :
Yet, trust 'em, hang 'em, *Wizards!* Old blinde Buz-
zards!

For once they hit, they miss a thousand times ;
And most times give quite contrary, bad for good,
And best for worst. One told a Gentleman
His son should be a man-killer, and hang'd for't ;
Who, after prov'd a great and rich Phyfician,
And with great Fame in the Universitie
Hang'd up in Picture for a grave example.
There was the *whim* of that. Quite contrary !

Old. And that was happy, would mine could so
deceive my fears.

Hea. They may ; but trust not to't. Another Sche-
mist

Found, that a Squint-ey'd boy should prove a notable
Pick-purse, and afterwards a most strong thief ;
When he grew up to be a cunning Lawyer,
And at last died a Judge. Quite contrary !
How many have been mark'd out by these *Wizards* ?
For fools, that after have been prick'd for Sheriffs ?
Was not a Shepherd-boy foretold to be
A Drunkard, and to get his living from
Bawds, Whores, Theeves, Quarrellors, and the like ?
And did he not become a Suburbe Justice ?

The merry Beggars.

And live in Wine and Worship by the Fees
Rack'd out of such Delinquents? There's the *whim*
blow on't.

Now I come to you: Your *Figure-slinger* finds,
That both your Daughters, *notwithstanding* all
Your great Possessions, which they are Co-heiress of,
Shall yet be Beggars *any day* It not be mean,
(If, as I said, there be a meaning in it)
They may prove *Courtiers*, or great Courtiers wives,
And so be Beggars in Law? Is not that
the *whim* on't think you? you shall think no worse
blow on't.

Old. Would I had your merry heart.

Hea. I thank you, Sir.

Old. I mean the like.

Hea. I would you had, and
Such an Estate as yours. Four thousand yearly,
With such a heart as mine, would *defie Fortune*,
And all her babbling *sooth-sayers*. I'd as soon
Distrust in *Providence*, as lend a fear
To such a *Destiny*, for a Child of mine,
While there be Sack and Songs in Town or Country.
Think like a man of conscience (now I am serious)
What justice can there be for such a curse
To fall upon your Heirs? Do you not live
Free, out of Law, or grieving any man?
Are you not th'onely rich man lives un-envied?
Have you not all the praises of the Rich,
And prayers of the Poor? Did ever any
Servant, or Hireling, Neighbour, Kindred curse you,
Or with one minute shorten'd of your life?
Have you one grudging Tenant? will they not all
Fight for you? Do they not teach their Children,

A Jovial Crew: or,

And make 'em too, pray for you morn and evening,
And in their Graces too, as duly as
For King and Realme? The innocent things would
think

They ought not eat else.

Old. 'Tis their goodness.

Hea. It is your merit. Your great love and bounty
Procures from Heaven those inspirations in 'em.
Whose Rent did ever you exact? whose have
You not remitted, when by casualties
Of fire, of floods, of common dearth, or sickness,
Poer men were brought behind hand? Nay, whose
losses.

Have you not piously repair'd?

Old. Enough.

Hea. What Harions have you tane from forlorne
Widows?

What Acre of your thousands have you rack'd?

Old. Good Friend, no more.

Hea. These are enough, indeed,
To fill your ears with joyful acclamations
Where'er you pass: Heaven bless our Landlord

Oldrent;

Our Master *Oldrent*; our good Patron *Oldrent*.

Cannot these sounds conjure that evil spirit

Of fear out of you, that your Children shall

Live to be *eggars*? Shall Squire *Oldrent's* Daughters

Weare old rents in their Garments? (there's a *whim*
too)

Because a *Fortune-teller* told you so?

Old. Come, I will strive to think no more on't.

Hea. Will you ride forth for air then, and be merry?

Old. Your counsel and example may instruct me.

Hea.

The merry Beggars.

Hea. Sack must be had in sundry places too.
For Songs I am provided.

Enter Springlove with Books and Papers,
he layes them on the Table.

Old. Yet here comes one brings me a second fear,
Who has my care the next unto my children.

Hea. Your Steward, Sir, it seems has business with
you.

I wish you would have none.

Old. I'll soon dispatch it :
And then be for our journey instantly.

Hea. I'll wait your coming down, Sir. *Exit.*

Old. But why, *Springlove,*

Is now this expedition ?

Spr. Sir, 'Tis duty.

Old. Not common among Stewards, I confess,
To urge in their Accompts before the day
Their Lords have limited. Some that are grown
To hoary haire and Knighthoods, are not found
Guilty of such an importunity.

'Tis yet but thirty daies, when I give forty
After the half-year day, our *Lady* last.

Could I suspect my Trust were lost in thee ;

Or doubt thy youth had not ability

To carry out the weight of such a charge,

I, then, should call on thee.

Spr. Sir, your indulgence,
I hope, shall ne'r corrupt me. Ne'rtheless,
The testimony of a fair discharge

From time to time, will be encouragement

Springlove turns over the several Booksto
his Master.

To virtue in me. You may then be pleas'd

A Jovial Crew : or,

To take here a Survey of all your Rents
Receiv'd, and all such other payments, as
Came to my hands since my last Audit, for
Cattel, Wool, Corn, all Fruits of Husbandry.
Then, my Receipts on Bonds, and some new Leases,
With some old debts, and almost desperate ones,
As well from Country Cavaliers, as Courtiers.
Then, here Sir, are my several Disbursements,
In all particulars for your self and Daughters,
In charge of House-keeping, Buildings and Repairs;
Journeys, Apparel, Coaches, Gifts, and all
Expences for your personal necessities.
Here, Servants wages, Liveries, and Cures.
Here for supplies of Horses, Hawks and Hounds.
And lastly, not the least to be remembred,
Your large Benevolences to the Poor.

old. Thy charity there goes hand in hand with mine.

And, *Springlove*, I commend it in thee, that
So young in years art grown so ripe in goodness.
May their Heaven-piercing Prayers bring on thee
Equall rewards with me.

Spr. Now here, Sir, is

The ballance of the several Accompts, (*ded*)
Which shews you what remains in Cash: which ad-
Unto your former Banck, makes up in all—

old. Twelve thousand and odd pounds.

Spr. Here are the keys

Of all. The Chests are safe in your own Closet.

old. Why in my Closet? is not yours as safe?

Spr. O, Sir, you know my suit.

old. Your suit? what suit?

Spr. Touching the time of year.

old.

The merry Beggars.

Old. 'Tis well-nigh *May*. Why what of that, good *Springlove*?

Spr. O, Sir, you hear I am call'd. *Nightingale sings.*

Old. Fie *Springlove*, fie.

I hop'd thou hadst abjur'd that uncouth practice.

Spr. You thought I had forsaken *Nature* then.

Old. Is that disease of *Nature* still in thee
So virulent? and, notwithstanding all
My favours, in my gifts, my cares, and counsels,
Which to a soul ingrateful might be boasted:
Have I first bred thee, and then prefer'd thee (from
I will not say how wretched a beginning)
To be a Master over all my Servants;
Planted thee in my bosom; and canst thou,
There, slight me for the whistling of a Bird?

Spr. Your reason, Sir, informs you, that's no cause.
But 'tis the season of the year that calls me.
What moves her Noats, provokes my disposition
By a more absolute power of *Nature*, then
Philosophy can render an account for.

Old. I finde there's no expelling it; but still
It will return. I have try'd all the means
(As I may safely think) in humane wisdom,
And did (as neer as reason could) assure me,
That thy last years restraint had stopp'd for ever,
That running fore on thee, that gadding humour:
When, onely for that cause, I laid the weight
Of mine Estate in Stewardship upon thee;
Which kept thee in that year, after so many
Sommer vagaries thou hadst made before.

Spr. You kept a Swallow in a Cage that while.
I cannot, Sir, indure another Sommer
In that restraint, with life: 'twas then my torment,
But

A Jovial Crew: or,

But now, my death. Yet, Sir, my life is yours:
Who are my Patron; freely may you take it.
Yet pardon, Sir, my frailty, that do beg
A small continuance of it on my knees.

Old. Can there no means be found to preserve life
In thee, but wandring, like a Vagabond?
Does not the Sun as comfortably shine
Upon my Gardens, as the opener Fields?
Or on my Fields, as others far remote?
Are not my Walks and Greens as delectable
As the High-ways and Commons? Are the shades
Of *Siccamore* and Bowers of *Eglantine*
Less pleasing then of Bramble, or thorne hedges?
Or of my Groves and Thickets, then wild Woods?
Are not my Fountain waters fresher then
The troubled streams, where every Beast does drink?
Do not the Birds sing here as sweet and lively,
As any other where? is not thy bed more soft,
And rest more safe, then in a Field or Barn?
Is a full Table, which is call'd thine own,
Less curious or wholsom, then the scraps
From others trenchers, twice or thrice translated?
spr. Yea, in the winter season, when the fire
Is sweeter then the air.

Old. What air is wanting?

spr. O Sir, y'have heard of Pilgrimages; and
The voluntary travels of good men.

Old. For Pennance; or to holy ends? but bring
Not those into comparison, I charge you.

spr. I do not, Sir. But pardon me, to think
Their sufferings are much sweetned by delights,
Such as we finde, by shifting place and air.

Old. Are there delights in beggary? Or, if to take
Diver-

The merry Beggars.

Diversity of Aire be such a Solace,
Travel the Kingdom over: And if this
Yeeld not variety enough, try further:
Provided your deportment be gentle,
Take Horse, and Man, and Money: you have all,
Or I'll allow enough.

Sing Nightingale, Cuckoo &c.

Spr. O how am I confounded!
Dear Sir, retort me naked to the world,
Rather then lay those burdens on me, which
Will stifle me. I must abroad or perish.

Old. I will no longer strive to wash this Moor:
Nor breath more minutes so unthriftilly,
In civil argument, against rude winde,
But rather practise to withdraw my love
And tender care (if it be possible)
From that unfruitful breast; incapable
Of wholesome counsel.

Spr. Have I your leave, Sir?

Old. I leave you to dispute it with your self.
I have no voice to bid you go, or stay:
My love shall give thy will preheminnence;
And leaveth effect to Time and Providence-- *Exit.*

Spr. I am confounded in my obligation
To this good man: His virtue is my punishment,
When 'tis not in my Nature to return
Obedience to his Merits. I could wish
Such an Ingratitude were Death by th' law,
And put in present execution on me,
Yo rid me of my sharper suffering.
Nor but by death, can this predominant sway
Of nature be extinguish'd in me. I
Have fought with my Affections, by th' assistance

A Journal Crew: or,

Of all the strengths of Art and Discipline
(All which I owe him for in education too)
To conquer and establish my observance
(As in all other rules) to him in this;
This inborn strong desire of liberty
In that free course, which he dejects as shamefull,
And I approve my earths felicity:

But finde the war is endless, and must fly.
What must I lose then? A good Master's love.
What loss feels he that wants not what he loses?
They'll say I lose all Reputation;
What's that, to live where no such thing is known?
My duty to a Master will be question'd.
Where duty is exacted it is none:
And among Beggars, each man is his own,

*Enter Randal and three or four servants with a great
Kettle, and black Jacks, and a Bakers Basket, all
empty, exeunt with all, manet Randal.*

Now fellows, what news from whence you came? I
Ran. The old wonted news, Sir, from your Guest-
house, the old Barn. We have unloaden the Bread-
basket, the Beef-Kettle, and the Beer-Bumbarde there,
amongst your Guests the Beggars: And they have all
prayed for you and our Master, as their manner is,
from the teeth outward, marry from the teeth in-
wards 'tis enough to swallow your Alms; from
whence I think their Prayers seldom come.

Spr. Thou should'st not think uncharitably.

Ran. Thought's free, Master Steward, and it please
you. But your Charity is nevertheless notorious, I
must needs say,

The merry Beggars.

Spr. Meritorious thou meantst to say.

Ran. Surely Sir, no; 'tis out of our Curats Book.

Spr. But I aspire no merits, nor popular thanks;
'Tis well if I do well in it.

Ran. It might be better though (if old *Randal*, whom you allow to talk, might counsel) to help to breed up poor mens children; or decayed labourers; past their work, or travel; or towards the setting up of poor young married couples; then to bestow an hundred pound a year (at least you do that, if not all you get) besides our Masters bounty, to maintain in begging such wanderers as these, that never are out of their way; that cannot give account from whence they came, or whither they would; nor of any beginning they ever had, or any end they seek; but still to strowle and beg till their bellies be full, and then sleep till they be hungry.

Spr. Thou art ever repining at those poore people! they take nothing from thee but thy pains: and that I pay thee for too. Why should'st thou grudge?

Ran. Am I not bitten to it every day, by the six-footed blood-hounds that they leave in their Litter, when I throw out the old, to lay fresh straw for the new comers at night. That's one part of my office. And you are sure that though your hospitality be but for a night and a morning for one Rabble, to have a new supply every evening. They take nothing from me indeed, they give too much.

Spr. Thou art old *Randal* still! ever grumbling, but still officious for 'em.

Ran. Yes; hang 'em, they know I love 'em well enough, I have had merry bouts with som of 'em.

Spr. What say'st thou *Randal*?

A Jovial Crew: or,

Ran. They are indeed my pastime. I left the merry Griggs (as their provender has prickt 'em) in such a Hoigh younder! such a frolick! you'll hear anon, as you walk neerer 'em.

Spr. Well honest *Randal*. Thus it is. I am for a journey. I know not how long will be my absence. But I will presently take order with the Cooke, Pantler and Butler, for my wonted allowance to the Poor; And I will leave money with thee to manage the affair till my return.

Ran. Then up rise *Randal*, Bayley of the Beggars.

Spr. And if our Master shall be displeas'd (although the charge be mine) at the opennes of the Entertainment, thou shalt then give it proportionably in money, and let them walk farther.

Ran. Pseugh! that will never do't, never do 'em good: 'Tis the Seat, the Habitation, the Rendezvous, that chears their hearts. Money would clog their consciences. Nor must I lose the musick of 'em in their lodging.

Spr. We will agree upon't anon. Go now about your business.

Ran. I go. Bayley? nay Steward and Chamberlain of the Rogues and Beggars. *Exit.*

Spr. I cannot think but with a trembling fear On this adventure, in a scruple, which I have not weigh'd with all my other doubts. I shall, in my departure, rob my Master. Of what? of a true Servant; other theft I have committed none. And that may be supply'd, And better too, by some more constant to him. But I may injure many in his Trust, Which now he cannot be but sparing of.

I rob

The merry Beggars.

I rob him too; of the content and hopes
He had in me, whom he had built and rais'd
Unto that growth in his affection,
That I became a gladness in his eye,
And now must be a grief or a vexation:

A noyse and singing within.
Unto his noble heart. But heark! I there's
The Harmony that drowns all doubts and fears.
A little nearer-----

Song.

From hunger and cold who lives more free,
Or who more richly clad then wee?
Our bellies are full; our flesh is warm;
And, against pride, our rags are a charm:
Enough is our Feast, and for to morrow
Let rich men care: we feel no sorrow.
No sorrow, no sorrow, no sorrow, no sorrow.
Let rich men care, we feel no sorrow.

Sp. The Emperour hears no such Musick; nor
feels content like this!

Each City, each Town, and every Village,
Affords us either an Alms or Pillage.
And if the weather be cold and raw

Then, in a Barn we tamble in straw.
If warm and fair, by yea-cock and nay-cock
The Fields will afford us a Hedge or a Hay-cock.

A Hay-cock, a Hay-cock, a Hay-cock, a Hay-cock,
The Fields will afford us a Hedge or a Hay-cock.

Spr. Most ravishing delight! But, in all this
Onely one sense is pleas'd: mine ear is feasted.
Mine eye too must be satisfied with my joyes.

A Jovial Crew

The hoarding Usurer cannot have more
Thirsty desire to see his golden store;
When he unlocks his Treasury; then I
The equipage in which my Beggars lie.

*He opens the Scene; the Beggars are discovered in
their postures; then they rise forth; and lastly, enter
the Patrico.*

All. Our Master, our Master! our sweet and com-
fortable Master.

Spr. How cheare my hearts?

1 Beg. Most crowse, most capringly.

Shall we dance, shall we sing, to welcome our King?
Strike up Piper a merry merry dance
That we on our stampers may foot it and prance,
To make his heart merry as he has made ours;
As lustick and frolique as Lords in their Bowers.

Musick. Dance.

Spr. Exceeding well perform'd.

1 Beg. 'Tis well if it like you, Master. But wee
have not that rag among us, that we will not daunce
off, to do you service; we being all and onely your
servants, most noble Sit. Command us therefore
and imploy us, we beseech you.

Spr. Thou speak'st most courtly.

2 Beg. Sir, he can speak, and could have writ as
well. He is a decay'd Poet, newly fallen in among
us; and begs as well as the best of us. He learnt it
pretty well in his own profession before; and can
the better practise it in ours now.

Spr. Thou art a wit too, it seems.

3 Beg. He should have wit and knavery too, Sir:

For

The merry Beggars.

For he was an Attorney, till he was pitch'd over the Bar. And, from that fall, he was taken up a Knight o' the Post; and so he continued, till he was degraded at the whipping-post; and from thence he ran resolutely into this course. His cunning in the Law, and the others labour with the *Muses* are dedicate to your service; and for my self, I'll fight for you.

Spr. Thou art a brave fellow, and speak'st like a Commander. Hast thou born Arms?

4 Beg. Sir, he has born the name of a *Netherland* Souldier, till he ran away from his Colours, and was taken lame with lying in the Fields by a *Sciatica*: I mean, Sir, the *strapado*. After which, by a second retreat, indeed running away, he scambled into his Country, and so escap'd the Gallows; and then snap'd up his living in the City by his wit in cheating, pimping, and such like Arts, till the Cart and the Pillory shewed him too publicly to the world. And so, begging being the last refuge, he enter'd into our society. And now lives honestly, I must needs say, as the best of us.

Spr. Thou speak'st good language too.

1 Beg. He was a Courtier born, Sir, and begs on pleasure I assure you, refusing great and constant means from able friends to make him a staid man. Yet (the want of a leg notwithstanding) he must travel in this kinde against all common reason, by the special policy of Providence.

Spr. As how, I prethee?

1 Beg. His Father, Sir, was a Courtier; a great Court Beggar I assure you; I made these Verses of Him and his Son here.

A Jovial Crew: or,

A Courtier beg'd by Covetise, not Need,
From Others that, which made them beg indeed.
He beg'd, till wealth had laden him with cares
To keep for's children and their children shares:
While the oppress'd, that lost that great Estate
Sent Curses after it unto their Fate.
The Father dies (the world saies) very rich;
The Son, being gotten while (it seems) the itch
Of begging was upon the Courtly Sire,
Or bound by Fate, will to no wealth aspire,
Tho' offer'd him in Money, Cloathes or Mear,
More then he begs, or instantly must eat.
Is not he heavenly blest, that hates Earth's Treasure
And begs, with *What's a Gentleman but's pleasure?*
Or say it be upon the Heire a curse;
What's that to him? The Beggar's ne'r the worse.
For of the general store that Heaven has sent
He values not a penny till't be spent.

All. A Scribble, a Scribble!

2 Beg. What City or Court Poet could say more
then our hedge Muse-monger here?

2 Beg. What say, Sir, to our Poet Scribble here?

Spr. I like his vain exceeding well; and the whole
Consort of you.

2 Beg. Consort, Sir. We have *Musicians* too a-
mong us: true merry Beggars indeed, that being
within the reach of the Lash for singing libellous
Songs at London, were fain to flie into our Covie,
and here they sing all our Poet's Ditties. They can
sing any thing most runably, Sir, but Psalms. What
they may do hereafter under a triple Tree, is much
expected. But they live very civilly and gently a-
mong us.

Spr.

The merry Beggars.

Spr. But what is he there? that solemn old fellow, that neither speaks of himself, nor any body for him.

2 Beg. O Sir, the rarest man of all. He is a *Prophet*. See how he holds up his prognosticating nose. He is divining *now*.

Spr. How? a *Prophet*?

2 Beg. Yes Sir, a cunning man and a Fortune-teller: 'tis thought he was a great Cleark before his decay, but he is very close, will not tell his beginning, nor the fortune he himself is false from: But he serves us for a Clergy-man still, and marries us, if need be, after a new way of his own.

Spr. How long have you had his company?

2 Beg. But lately come amongst us, but a very ancient Strowle all the Land over, and has travell'd with *Gipsies*, and is a *Patrico*. Shall he read your Fortune Sir?

Spr. If it please him.

Pat. Lend me your hand, Sir.

By this Palme I understand,

Thou art born to wealth and Land,

And after many a bitter gust,

Shalt build with thy great Granfires dust.

Spr. Where shall I finde it? but come, Ile not trouble my head with the search.

2 Beg. What say, Sir, to our Crew? are we not well congregated?

Spr. You are a *Jovial Crew*; the onely people Whose happiness I admire.

3 Beg. Will you make us happy in serving you? have you any *Enemies*? shall we fight under you? will you be our *Captain*?

A Jovial Game of

1. Nay, not King. *But what is he there?*

2. Command us something, Sir. *What shall I say?*

Spr. Where's the next Rendezvous?

1. Neither in Village nor in Town:

But three mile off at Mith-drown. *What's that?*

Spr. At evening there I'll visit you.

Song.

Come, come, away: The Spring

(By every Bird that can but sing,

Or chirp a note) doth now invite

Us forth, to taste of his delight.

In Field, in Grove, on Hill, in Dale;

But above all the Nightingale;

Who in her sweetness strives it out;

The loudest of the hoarse Cuckoo.

Cuckoo cries he; Jug Jug Jug sings she,

From bush to bush, from tree to tree,

Why in one place then tarry we?

Come away; why do we stay?

We have no debt or rent to pay.

No bargains or accounts to make;

Nor Land or Lease to let or take:

Or if we had, should that remove us;

When all the world's our own before us;

And where we pass, and make resort,

It is our Kingdom and our Court.

Cuckoo cries he; Jug Jug sings she.

Excuse Cantantes.

Spr. So, now away.

They dream of happiness that live in State,

But they enjoy it that obey their Fate.

The merry Beggars.

Actus Secundus.

Vincent, Hilliard, Meriel, Rachel.

Vin. I Am overcome with admiration, at the felicity they take!

Hil. Beggars! They are the only people, can boast the benefit of a free state, in the full enioyment of Liberty, Mirth and Ease; having all things in common and nothing wanting of Nature's whole provision within the reach of their desires. Who would have lost this sight of their Revels?

Vin. How think you Ladies? Are they not the only happy in a Nation?

Mer. Happier then we I'm sure, that are pent up and tied by the nose to the continual stream of hot Hospitality, here in our Father's house, when they have the Aire at pleasure in all variety.

Ra. And though I know we have merrier Spirits then they, yet to live thus confin'd, stifles us.

Hil. Why Ladies, you have liberty enough; or may take what you please.

Mer. Yes in our Father's Rule and Government, or by his allowance. What's that to absolute freedom; such as the very Beggars have; to feast and revel here to day, and yonder to morrow; next day where they please; and so on still, the whole Country or Kingdome over? ther's Liberry! the birds of the aire can take no more.

Ra. And then at home here, or wheresoever he comes, our Father is so pensive, (what muddy spirit soe'er possesses him, would I could conjure't out)

A Jovial Crew: or,

that he makes us even sick of his sadness, that were wont to see my Gossips cock to day ; mould Cocklebread ; dancke clutterdeponch ; and Lannykin booby ; binde barrels ; or do any thing before him , and he would laugh at us.

Mer. Now he never looks upon us, but with a sigh, or teares in his eyes, tho' we simper never so sanctifiedly. What tales have been told him of us, or what he suspects I know not ; God forgive him, I do ; but I am weary of his house.

Ra. Does he think us Whores too, because sometimes we talke as lightly as great Ladies. I can swear safely for the virginity of one of us, so far as Word and Deed goes ; marry Thought's free.

Mer. Which is that one of us I pray ? your selfe or me ?

Ra. Good sister *Meriel*, Charity begins at home. But I'll swear I think as charitably of thee : And not onely because thou art a year younger neither.

Mer. I am beholden to you. But for my Father, I would I knew his grief and how to cure him, or that we were where we could not see it. It spoiles our mirth, and that has been better then his Meat to us.

Win. Will you heare our motion Ladies ?

Mer. Psew, you would marry us presently out of this way, because he has given you a foolish kinde of promise : But we will see him in a better humor first, and as apt to laugh as we to lie down, I warrant him.

Will. 'Tis like that course will cure him, would you imbrace it.

Ra. We will have him cur'd first, I tell you : And you shall wait that season, and our leasure.

Mer. I will rather hazard my being one of the Devils

The merry Beggars.

vil's Ape-leaders, then to marry while he is melancholly.

Ra. Or I to stay in his house; to give entertainment to this Knight, or t'other Coxcomb, that comes to cheer him up with eating of his chear: when we must fetch 'em sweetmeats, and they must tell us, Ladies, your lips are sweeter, and then fall into Courtship, one in a set speech taken out of old *Britains Works*, another with Verses out of the *Academy of Complements*, or some or other of the new Poetical Pamphletters, ambitious onely to spoile Paper, and publish their names in print. And then to be kist, and sometimes flaver'd—fagh.

Mer. 'Tis not to be indur'd. We must out of the House. We cannot live but by laughing, and that aloud, and no body sad within hearing.

Vin. We are for any adventure with you, Ladies. Shall we project a journey for you? your Father has trusted you, and will think you safe in our company; and we would fain be abroad upon som progress with you. Shall we make a fling to *London*, and see how the Spring appears there in the *spring-Garden*; and in *Hide-park*, to see the Races, Horse and Foot; to hear the *jockies* crack; and see the *Adammies* run naked afore the Ladies?

Ra. We have seen all already there, as well as they, last year.

Hil. But there ha' been new Playes since.

Ra. No: no: we are not for *London*.

Hil. What think you of a Journey to the Bath then?

Ra. Worse then t'other way. I love not to carry my Health where others drop their Diseases. There's no sport i' that.

A Jovial Crew: &c.

Vin. Will you up to the hill top of Spirits, Armes,
and Merriments, *Dovors Olimpicks* or the *Cottwold*
Gapers?

Mer. No, that will be too publique for our Re-
creation: We would have it more within ourselves.

Hil. Think of some course your selves then. We
are for you upon any way, as far as Horse and Money
can carry us.

Vin. If and if those means faile us; as far as our
legs can bear, or our hands can help us.

Ra. And we will put you to't. Come aside *Me-
riel*.

Vin. Some jere, perhaps to put upon us.

Hil. What think you of a Pilgrimage to *St. Wini-
frides Well*?

Vin. Or a Journey to the wise woman at *Nant-
wich*, to ask if we be fit husbands for 'em?

Hil. They are not scrupulous in that; we having
had their growing loves up from our Childhoods;
and the old *Squire's* good will before all men.

Ra. Me. Ha ha ha---

Vin. What's the conceit I mervail.

Ra. Me. Ha ha ha ha---

Hil. Some merry one it seems.

Ra. And then, firrah *Meriel*--- Hearkagen--- ha
ha ha---

Vin. How they are taken with it!

Mer. Ha ha ha--- Hearkagen *Rachel*.

Hil. Some wonderful Nothing sure: They will
laugh as much to see a swallow fly with a white fea-
ther imp'd in her tail.

Vin. They were born laughing I think.

Ra. Me. Ha ha ha---

Vin.

The merry Beggars

Vin. If it be not some trick upon us, which they'll discover in some monstrous shape, they cozen me. Now Ladies, is your Project ripe? possess you with the knowledge of it.

Ra. It is more precious, then to be imparted upon a slight demand.

Hil. Pray let us hear it. You know we are your trusty servants.

Vin. And have kept all your counsels ever since we have been Infant Playfellows.

Ra. Yes, you have plaid at all kinds of small game with us; but this is to the purpose. Ha ha ha---

Hil. It seems so by your laughing.

Ra. And asks a stronger tongue-tie then tearing of Books; burning of Samplers; making Dirt-pies; or pils and paddles in't.

Vin. You know how, and what we have vow'd: to wait upon you any way, any how, and any whither.

Mer. And you will stand ro't?

Hil. I, and go to't with you, wherever it be.

Mer. Pray tell't to my sister Rachel.

Ra. Why Gentlemen--ha ha-- This it is-- Tell it you Meriel.

Vin. O, is it that?

Mer. You are the elder. Pray tell it you.

Ra. You are the younger. I command you tell it. Come, out with it

They long to have it.

Hil. When?

Vin. When?

Mer. Introth you must tell it, sister, I cannot. Pray begin.

has

Then

A Jovial Crews or,

Ra. Then Gentlemen stand your ground!

Vin. Some terrible business sure!

Ra. You seem'd e'n now to admire the felicity of Beggars.

Mer. And have engag'd your selves to join with us in any course.

Ra. Will you now with us, and for our sakes turn Beggars?

Mer. It is our Resolution; and our Injunction on you.

Ra. But for a Time; and a short Progress.

Mer. And for a spring-trick of youth, now, in the season.

Vin. Beggars! What Rogues are these?

Hil. A simple trial of our Loves and service!

Ra. Are you resolv'd upon't? If not God bwy'. We are resolv'd to take our course.

Mer. Let yours be to keep counsel.

Vin. Stay, stay. Beggars! Are we not so already? Do we not beg your loves, and your enjoyings? Do we not beg to be receiv'd your servants? To kiss your hands, or (if you will vouchsafe) Your lips; or your imbraces?

Hil. We now beg, That we may fetch the Rings and Priest to marry Wherein are we no Beggars?

Ra. That will not serve. Your time's not come for that yet.

You shall beg *Viſuals* first.

Vin. O, I conceive your begging progress is to ramble out this sommer among your Father's Tenants; and 'tis in request among Gentlemen's Daughters to devour their Cheese-cakes, Apple-pies, Cream and

The merry Beggars.

Custards, Flapiacks, and Pan-puddings. To the others

Mer. Not so, not so,

Hil. Why so we may be a kinde of civil Beggars.

Ra. I mean stark, errant, downright Beggars, I,
Without equivocation; Statute Beggars.

Mer. Couchant and Passant, Guardant, Rampant
Beggars.

Vin. Current and vagrant----

Hil. Stockant, whippant Beggars!

Vin. Must you and we be such? would you so
have it?

Ra. Such as we saw so merry; and you concluded
Were th'onely happy People in a Nation.

Mer. The onely Freeman of a Common-wealth;
Free above Scot-free; that observe no Law,
Obey no Governour, use no Religion,
But what they draw from their own ancient custom,
Or constitute themselves, yet are no Rebels.

Ra. Such as of all mens Meat and all mens Money
Take a free part; and, wherefoe're they travel.
Have all things gratis to their hands provided.

Vin. Courte fare most times.

Ra. Their stomach makes it good;
And feasts on that, which others scorn for Food.

Mer. The Antidote, Content, is onely theirs.
And, unto that, such full delights are known,
That they conceive the Kingdom is their own.

Vin. Fore Heaven I think they are in earnest: for
they were alwaies mad.

Hil. And we were madder then they, if we should
lose 'em.

Vin. 'Tis but a mad trick of youth (as they say)
for the Spring, or a short progress: and mirth may be

A Jovial Crew: or,

made out of it; knew we how to carry it.

Ra. Pray Gentlemen be sudden.

Heark, you hear the Cuckoe.

Cuckoe

Hil. We are most resolutely for you in your course.

Vin. But the vexation is how to set it on foot.

Ra. We have projected it. Now if you be perfect and constant Lovers and friends, search you the means. We have puzzell'd 'em.

Mer. I am glad on't. Let 'em pump.

Vin. Troth a small stock will serve to set up withal. This Doublet sold off o' my back, might serve to furnish a Camp Royal of us.

Hil. But how to enter or arrange our selves into the *Crew* will be the difficulty. If we light raw and tame amongst 'em (like Cage-Birds among a flight of wild ones) we shall never pick up a Living, but have our brains peckt out.

Vin. We want instruction dearly.

Enter Springlove.

Hil. O here comes *Springlove*. His great Benefactorship among the *Beggars* might prefer us with Authority into a ragged Regiment presently. Shall I put it to him.

Ra. Take heed what you do. His greatness with my Father will betray us.

Vin. I will cut his throat then. My noble *Springlove*, the great Commander of the *Maunders*, and King of *Canter*s, we saw the gratitude of your loyal Subjects, in the large Tributary content they gave you in their Revels.

Spr. Did you, Sir?

Hil. We have seen all with great delight and admiration.

Spr.

The merry Beggars.

Spr. I have seen you too, kinde Gentlemen and Ladies; and over-heard you in your queint designe, to new create your selves out of the worldly blessings, and spiritual graces Heaven has bestow'd upon you, to be partakers and Co-actors too, in those vile courses, which you call delights, tane by those despicable and abhorred Creatures.

Vin. Thou art a Despiser, nay a Blasphemer Against the Maker of those happy Creatures. Who, of all humane, have priority In their content. In which they are so blest That they enjoy most in possessing least. Who made 'em such, dost think? or why so happy?

Ra. He grows zealous in the Cause: sure he'll be indeed.

Hil. Art thou an Hypocrite, then, all this while? Onely pretending *Charity*; or using it To get a Name and Praise unto thy self; And not to cherish and increase those Creatures, In their most happy way of living? Or Dost thou bestow thine Alms with a foul purpose To stint their Begging, and with loss to buy And slave those free souls from their liberty?

Mer. They are more zealous in the Cause then we.

Spr. But are you, Ladies, at defiance too With Reputation, and the Dignity Due to your Father's House and You?

Ra. Hold thy peace, good *Springlove*, And, tho' you seem to dislike this course, and reprove us for it,

Do not betray us in it: your throat's in question. I tell you for good will, good *Springlove*.

Mer. What wouldst thou have us do?

A Jovial Crew: or,

Thou talk'st of th' House;

'Tis a base melancholly House.

Our Father's sadness banishes us out on't.

And, for the delight thou tak'st in Beggars and their brawls, thou canst not but think they live a better life abroad, then we do in this House.

Spr. I have sounded your Faith: And I am glad I finde you all right. And for your Father's sadness, I'll tell you the cause on't. I over-heard it but this day in his private Discourse with his merry Mate Master *Hearty*. He has been told by some *Wizard* that you both were born to be *Beggars*.

All. How. How!

Spr. For which he is so tormented in minde, that he cannot sleep in peace, nor look upon you but with hearts grief.

Vin. This is most strange.

Ra. Let him be griev'd then; till we are *Beggars*, We have just reason to become so now: And, what we thought on but in jest before, We'll do in earnest now.

Spr. O, I applaud this resolution in you; Would have perswaded it; will be your Servant in't. For, look ye, *Ladies*: The Sentence of your Fortune does not say, that you shall beg for need; hungry or cold necessity. If therefore you expose your selves on pleasure into it, you shall absolve your destiny nevertheless; and cure your Father's grief. I am over-joy'd to think on't; and will assist you faithfully.

All. A *Springlove*! a *Springlove*!

Spr. I am prepar'd already for th' adventure. And will with all conveniencies furnish,

And

And

The merry Beggars.

And set you forth ; give you your Dimenſions,
Rules and Directions : I will be your Guide,
Your Guard, your Convoy, your Authority.
You do not know my Power ; my Command
I th' *Beggars* Commonwealth.

Vin. But how ? But how, good *Springlove* ?

Spr. I'll confeſs all. In my Minority
My Maſter took me up a naked *Beggar* ;
Bred me at School ; then took me to his Service ;
(You know in what good faſhion) and you may
Collect to memory for ſeven late Sommers,
Either by leave, pretending Friends to ſee
At far remote parts of the Land, or elſe,
By ſtealth, I would abſent my ſelf from ſervice,
To follow my own Pleaſure, which was Begging,
Led to't by *Nature*. My indulgent Maſter
(Yet ignorant of my courſe) on my ſubmiſſion
When Cold and Hunger forc'd me back at Winter,
Receiv'd me ſtill again. Till, two years ſince,
He being drawn by journey towards the North,
Where I then quarter'd with a ragged *Crew* ;
On the high way, not dreaming of him there,
I did accoſt him, with a *Good your Worſhip*
The Giſt one ſmale penny to a Creaple ;
(For here I was with him) and the good Lord Halts
To bleſs you, and reſtore it you in Heaven.

All. Ha ha ha.

Spr. My head was dirty clouted, and this leg
Swadled with Rags, the other naked, and
My body clad, like his upon the Gibbet.
Yet, He, with ſearching eyes, through all my Rags
And counterfeit Poſtures, made diſcovery
Of his Man *Springlove* ; chid me into tears ;

A Jovial Crew: or,

And a confession of my forespent life.
At last, upon condition, that vagary
Should be the last, he gave me leave to run
That *Summer* out. In *Autumne* home came I
In my home Cloaths again and former Duty.
My Master not alone conserv'd my Counsel;
But laies more weighty Trust and Charge upon me;
Such was his love to keep me a home-Man,
That he conferr'd his Stewards place upon me,
Which clog'd me, the last year, from those Delights,
I would not lose again to be his Lord.

All. A *Springlove*, a *Springlove*.

(fully

Spr. Pursue the course you are on then, as cheer-
As the inviting Season smiles upon you.
Think how you are necessitated to it,
To quit your Father's sadness, and his fears
Touching your *Fortune*. Till you have been *Beggars*
The Sword hangs over him. You cannot think
Upon an Act of greater Piety
Unto your Father, then t'expose your selves
Brave Volunteers, unpres'd by common need
Into this meritorious Warfare; whence
(After a few daies, or short season spent)
You bring him a perpetual Peace and Joy
By expiating the Prophecy that torments him.
T'were worth your Time in painful, woful steps,
With your lives hazard in a Pilgrimage,
So to redeem a Father. But you'll finde
A Progress of such Pleasure (as I'll govern't)
That the most happy Courts could never boast
In all their Trappings on the Countries coast;
Whose envy we shall draw, when they shall reade
We out-beg them, and for as little Need.

All.

The merry Beggars.

All. A Springlove! a Springlove!

Spr. Follow me, Gallants, then, as cheerfully
As-- (heark!) we are summon'd forth. *Birds*

All. We follow thee.--- *Exeunt.* *singing*

Enter Randal. *A Purse in his hand.*

Ran. Well, go thy waies. If ever any just or charitable Steward was commended, sure thou shalt be at the last Quarter-day. Here's five and twenty pounds for this Quarters *Beggar-charge*. And (if he return not by the end of this Quarter) here's order to a Friend to supply for the next. If I now should venture for the commendation of an unjust Steward, and turn this Money to mine own use! ha! deare Devil tempt me not. I'll do thee service in a greater Matter. But to rob the *Poor*! (a poor trick) every Church-warden can do't. Now something whispers me, that my Master, for his Stewards love, will supply the *Poor*, as I may handle the matter. Then I rob the Steward, if I restore him not the Money at his return. Away Temptation, leave me. I am frail flesh: yet I will fight with thee. But say the Steward never return. O but he will return. Perhaps he may not return. Turn from me *Satan*: strive not to clog my conscience. I would not have this weight upon't for all thy Kingdom.

Enter Hearty singing, and Oldrents.

Hey down hay down a down &c.

Remember, Sir, your Covenant to be merry.

Old. I strive you see to be so.

Yet something pricks me within, me thinks.

Hea. No further thought, I hope, of *Fortunes* tell-tales.

Old. I think not of 'em. Nor will I presage,

That

A Jovial Crew: or,

That when a disposition of sadness
O'rclouds my spirits, I shall therefore hear
Ill news, or shortly meet with some disaster.

Hea. Nay, when a man meets with bad tidings,
why

May not he then compel his minde to mirth;
As well as puling stomacks are made strong
By eating against Appetite?

Old. Forc'd Mirth tho' is not good.

Hea. It relishes not you'll say. No more does Meat
That is most savory to a long sick stomach,
Until by Strife and Custom 'tis made good.

Old. You argue well. But do you see yon'd Fellow?

Hea. I never noted him so sad before.
He neither sings nor whistles.

Old. Something troubles him.
Can he force Mirth out of himself now, think you?

Hea. What speak you of a Clod of Earth; a Hind?
But one degree above a Beast, compar'd
To th' aëry spirit of a Gentleman?

Old. He looks, as he came laden with ill news,
To meet me on my way.

Hea. 'Tis very pretty.
Suppose the Afs be tir'd with sadness: will you dis-
burden him (merry
To load your self? Think of your Covenant to be
In spite of Fortune and her Riddle-makers.

Old. Why how now *Randal*! sad? where's *Spring-
love*?

Hea. He's ever in his Care. But that I know
The old *Squire's* virtue, I should think *Springlove*.
Were sure his Bastard.

Ran. Here's his Money, Sir.

I pray

The merry Beggars.

I pray that I be charg'd with it no longer.
The Devil and I have strain'd courtesie these two hours about it. I would not be corrupted with the trust of more then is mine own. Mr. Steward gave me, Sir, to order it for the *Beggars*. He has made me Steward of the Barn and them, while he is gone (he saies) a Journey, to survey and measure Lands abroad about the Countries. Some purchase I think for your Worship.

Old. I know his measuring of Land. He is gone his old way.

And let him go. Am not I merry Hearty? (now.

Hea. Yes; but not hearty merry. There's a *whim*.

Old. The Poor's charge shall be mine. Keep you the Money for him.

Ran. Mine is the greater charge then.
Knew you but my temptations and my care,
You would discharge me of it.

Old. Ha ha ha.

Ran. I have not had it so many minutes, as I have been in several Minds about it; and most of them dishonest.

Old. Go then, and give it to one of my Daughters to keep for *Springlove*.

Ran. O, I thank your Worship--- *Exit.*

Old. Alas poor knave! How hard a task it is to alter Custome!

Hea. And how easie for Monie to corrupt it.
What a pure *Treasurer* would he make!

Old. All were not born for weighty Offices.
Which makes me think of *Springlove*.
He might have tane his leave tho'.

Hea. I hope he's run away with some large Trust,
F I never

A Jovial Crew: or,

I never lik'd such demure down-look'd Fellows.

Old. You are deceiv'd in him.

Hea. If you be not 'tis well. But this is from the
Covenant.

Old. Well Sir. I will be merry. I am resolv'd
To force my Spirit onely unto Mirth.
Should I heare now, my Daughters were misled
Or run away, I would not send a sigh
To fetch 'em back.

Hea. To'ther old Song for that.

Song.

THere was an old fellow at Waltham Cross,
Who merrily sung when he liv'd by the Loss.

He never was heard to sigh with Hey-ho:

But sent it out with a Haigh trolly lo.

He cheer'd up his Heart, when his Goods went to wrack,
With a heghm boy, heghm, and a Cup of old Sack.

Old. Is that the way on't? well, it shall be mine

Enter Randal. (then.

Ran. My Mistresses are both abroad, Sir.

Old. How? since when?

Ran. On foot, Sir, two hours since, with the two
Gentlemen their Lovers. Here's a Letter they left
with the Butler. And there's a muttering in the
House.

Old. I will not reade, nor open it; but conceive
Within my self the worst, that can befall them;
That they are lost and no more mine. What follows?
That I am happy: all my cares are flown.
The Counsel I anticipated from
My Friend, shall serve to set my Rest upon

(With-

The merry Beggars.

(Without all further helps) to jovial Mirth :
Which I will force out of my spleen so freely,
That Grief shall lose her name, where I have being ;
And sadness, from my furthest foot of Land,
While I have life, be banish'd.

Hea. What's the *whim* now? (month ;

Old. My Tenants shal sit Rent-free for this twelve-
And all my servants have their wages doubled ;
And so shall be my charge in House-keeping.
I hope my friends will finde and put me to't.

Hea. For them I'll be your Undertaker, Sir.
But this is over-done. I do not like it.

Old. And for thy news, the Money that thou hast,
Is now thine own. I'll make it good to *Springlove*.
Be sad with it and leave me. For I tell thee,
I'll purge my house of stupid melancholly. (me

Ran. I'll be as merry as the Charge that's under
A confused noyse within of laughing and singing, and
one crying out.

The Beggars, Sir. Do'e hear 'em in the Barn?

Old. I'll double their allowance too ; that they
may
Double their Numbers, and increase their Noyse:
These Bear not sound enough: and one (me thought)
Cri'd out among 'em.

Ran. By a most natural Cause. For there's a *Doxie*
Has been in labour, Sir. And 'tis their Custome,
With songs and shouts to drown the woman's cries.
A Ceremony which they use, not for
Devotion, but to keep off Notice of
The Work, they have in hand. Now she is in
The straw it, seems ; and they are quiet.

Hea. The straw ! that's very proper there. That's
Randal's whim. F 2 *Old.*

A Jovial Crew : or,

old. We will have such a lying in, and such
A Christning ; such up-sitting and Ghosslipping !
I mean to send forty miles Circuit at the least,
To draw in all the *Beggars* can be found ;
And such Devices we will have for jollity,
As *Fame* shall boast to all *Posterity*.

Am I not merry *Hearty* ? hearty merry ?

Hea. Would you were else. I fear this over-doing.

old. I'll do't for expiation of a crime
That's charg'd upon my Conscience till't be done.

Hea. What's that ? what saies he ?

old. We will have such a Festival moneth on't,
Randall----

Ran. Sir, you may spare the labour and the cost :
They'l never thank you for't. They'l not indure
A Ceremony, that is not their own,
Belonging either to the Childe, or Mother.
A moneth Sir ? They'l not be detain'd so long
For your Estate. Their Work is done already :
The Bratling's born, the *Doxey's* in the *Strummel*,
Laid by an *Autum Mort* of their own Crew,
That serv'd for Mid-wife : and the Child-bed wo-
Eating of hasty Pudding for her supper, (man
And the Child part of it for pap
I warrant you by this time ; then to sleep ;
So to rise early to regain the strength
By travail, which she lost by travail.

Hea. There's *Randal* again.

old. Can this be ? (row

Ran. She'l have the *Bantling* at her back to mor-
That was to day in her belly, and march a foot-back
with it.

Hea. Art there agen, old *Randal* ?

Ran.

The merry Beggars.

Ran. And for their Ghosflipping (now you are so
nigh)
If you'll look in, I doubt not, but you'll find 'em
At their high Feast already.

Hea. Pray let's see 'em, Sir.

*Randal opens the Scene. The Beggars discovered at
their Feast. After they have scrambled a while
at their Victuals: This Song.*

Here, safe in our Skipper, let's cly off our Peck,
And bowse in defiance o' th' Harman-beck.
Here's Pannum and Lap, and good Poplars of Yarrum,
To fill up the Crib, and to comfort the Quarron.

Now bowse a round health to the Go-well and Com-well
Of Cisley Bumtrincket that lies in the Strummel.

Now bowse a round health to the Go-well and Com-well
Of Cisley Bumtrincket that lies in the Strummel.

Here's Ruffpeck and Casson, and all of the best,
And Scraps of the Dainties of Gentry Cofe's Feast.
Here's Grunter and Bleater, with Tib of the Buttry,
And Margery Prater, all drest without sluttry.

For all this bene Cribbing and Peck let us then,
Bowse a health to the Gentry Cofe of the Ken.

Now bowse a round health to the Go-well and Com-well
Of Cisley Bumtrincket that lies in the Strummel.

old. Good Heaven how merry they are.

Hea. Be not you sad at that.

old. Sad Hearty, no unless it be with envy
At their full happiness. What is an Estate (dom,
Of Wealth and Power, balkunc'd with their Free-

A Jovial Crew: or,

But a meer load of outward complement?
When they enjoy the Fruits of rich Content?
Our Dross but weighs us down into Despair,
While their sublimed spirits daunce i' th' Ayr.

Hea. I ha' not so much Wealth to weigh me down,
Nor so little (I thank *Chance*) as to daunce naked.

Old. True my Friend *Hearty*, thou having lesse
then I,
(Of which I boast not) art the merrier man:
But they exceed thee in that way so far,

That should I know, my Children now were *Beggars*
(Which yet I will not read) I must conclude,
They were not lost, nor I to be agriev'd.

Hea. If this be madness, 'tis a merry Fit.

Enter Patrico. *Many of the Beggars look out.*

Patrico. *Tou're out with your Glaspers, I swear by
the Ruffin,*

That we are assaulted by a *quire Cuffin.*

Ran. Hold! what d'e mean, my Friends? This is
our Master,

The Master of your Feast and feasting-House.

Pat. Is this the *Gentry Cofe*?

All the Beggars. Lord blefs his Worship. His good
Worship. Blefs his Worship.

Exit Beggars manet Patr.

Pat. Now, bounteous Sir, before you go,
Hear me, the *Beggar Patrico*;
Or Priest, if you do rather chuse,
That we no word of Canting use.
Long may you live, and may your Store
Never decay, nor baulk the Poor:
And as you more in years do grow,
May Treasure to your Coffers flow;

And

The merry Beggars.

And may your care no more thereon
Be set, then ours are, that have none :
But as your Riches do increase,
So may your hearts Content and Peace.
And, after many, many years,
When the Poor have quit their *Fears*
Of losing you; and that with *Heaven*
And all the world you have made even,
Then may your blest Posterity,
Age after Age successively,
Until the world shall be untwin'd
Inherit your Estate and Minde.
So shall the Poor to the last day,
For you, in your succession, pray.

Hea. 'Tis a good Vote, *Sir Patrico* : but you are
too grave. Let us hear and see something of your
merry *Grigs*, that can sing, play Gambals, and do
Feats.

Pat. Sir, I can lay my Function by,
And talk as wilde and wantonly
As *Tom* or *Tib*, or *Jack*, or *Jill*,
When they at *Bowsing Ken* do swill.
Will you therefore daign to hear
My *Autum Mort*, with throat as clear,
As was *Dame Anisses* of the Name ;
How sweet in Song her Notes she'll frame,
That when she chides, as lowd is yawning,
As *Chanticleere* wak'd by the dawning. (wife?)

Hea. Yes, pray let's hear her. What is she your

Pat. Yes Sir. we of our Ministry,
As well as those oth' *Presbyterie*,
Take wives and desie Dignitie.

Hea. A learned Cleark in veritie !

Exit.

Enter

A Jovial Crew: or,

Enter Patrico with his old wife, with a wooden Bowle of Drink. She is drunk.

Pat. By *Salmon*, I think my *Mort* is in drink.
I finde by her stink; and the pretty pretty pink
Of her *Neyes*, that half wink,
That the tipling Feast, with the *Doxie* in the Neast,
Hath turn'd her brain, to a merry merry vain.

Mort. Go Fiddle *Patrico*, and let me sing. First set
me down here on both my *Prats*. Gently, gently, for
cracking of my wind; now I must use it. Hem hem.

She sings.

T*His is Bien Bowse, this is Bien Bowse,
Too little is my Skew.
I bowse no Lage, but a whole Gage
Of this I'll bowse to you.*

*This Bowse is better then Rom-bowse,
It sets the Gan a gigling;
The Autum-Mort finds better sport
In bowsing then in nigling.
This is Bien-bowse &c.*

She tosses off her Bowle, falls back, and is carried out.

Pat. So so: your part is done-- *Exit with her*

Hea. How finde you, Sir, your self?

Old. Wondrous merry, my good Hearty.

Enter Patrico.

Pat. I wish we had, in all our store,
Something that could please you more.
The old or *Autum-Mort*'s a sleep;
But before the young ones creep
Into the straw, Sir, if you are,
(As Gallants sometimes love course fare,

So

The merry Beggars.

(So it be fresh and wholesome Ware)
Dispos'd to *Doxie*, or a *Dell*,
That never yet with man did Mell ;
Of whom no *Upright man* is taster,
I'll present her to you, Master.

Old. Away. You would be punish'd. Oh.

Hea. How is it with you, Sir ?

Old. A sudden qualm over-chills my stomach. But
'twill away.

Enter Dancers. (Sports,

Pat. See, in their rags, then, dauncing for your
Our *Clapper Dugeons* and their *walking Morts*.

Dance.

Pat. You have done well. Now let each *Tripper*
Make a retreat into the *Skipper* ;
And *couch a Hogs-head*, till the *dark man's* past ;
Then all with Bag and Baggage *bing awaft*.

Exeunt Beggars.

Ran. I told you, Sir, they would be gone to mor-
I understand their canting. (row.

Old. Take that amongst you.--- *Gives Money.*

Pat. May rich Plenty so you blefs,
Tho' you still give, you ne're have less. *Exit.*

Hea. And as your walks may lead this way :
Pray strike in here another day.

So you may go, Sir *Patrico*----

How think you, Sir ? or what ? or why do you think
at all, unless on Sack and Supper-time ? do you fall
back ? do you not know the danger of relapses ?

Old. Good *Hearty*, thou mistak'st me. I was think-
ing upon this *Patrico*. And that he has more soule
then a born Beggar in him.

Hea. Rogue enough though, to offer us his what-
d'ecalts?

A Jovial Crew: or,

d'ecalts? his *Doxies*. Heart and a cup of Sack, do we look like old Beggar-niglers?

Old. Pray forbear that Language.

Hea. Will you then talk of Sack, that can drown sighing? will you in, to supper, and take me there your Guest? Or must I creep into the Barn among your welcome ones?

Old. You have rebuk'd me timely; and most friendly.

Exit.

Hea. Would all were well with him.

Exit.

Ran. It is with me.

For now these pounds are (as I feel them swag)

Light at my heart, tho' heavy in the bag.

Exit.

ACTus Tertius.

Vincent and Hilliard in their Rags.

Vin. **I**S this the life that we admir'd in others; with Envy at their happiness?

Hill. Pray let us make vertuous use of it: and repent us of that deadly sin (before a greater punishment then Famine and Lice fall upon us) by steering our course homeward. Before I'll indure such another night-----

Vin. what? what wouldst thou do? I would thy Mistress heard thee.

Hil. I hope thee does not. For I know there is no altering our course before they make the first motion.

Vin. Is't possible we should be weary already? and before their softer constitutions of flesh and blood?

Hill.

The merry Beggars.

Hill. They are the stronger in will it seems.

Enter Springlove.

Spr. How now *Comrades!* repining already at your Fulness of Liberty? Do you complain of ease?

Vin. Ease call'st thou it? Didst thou sleep to night?

Spr. Not so well these 18 moneths I swear; since my last walks.

Hill. Lightning and Tempest is out of thy *Lctany*. Could not the thunder wake thee?

Spr. Ha ha ha.

Vin. Nor the noise of the *Crew* in the Quarter by us?

Hill. Nor the Hogs in the hovel, that cri'd till they drown'd the noise of the winde?

If I could but once ha' dreamt in all my former nights, that such an affliction could have been found among *Beggars*, sure I should never have travell'd to the proof on't.

Vin. We look'd upon them in their Jollity, and cast no further.

Hill. Nor did that onely draw us forth (by your favour *Vince*) but our obedience to our Loves, which we must suffer, till they cry home agen. Are they not weary yet, as much as we dost think *Springlove*?

Spr. They have more moral understanding then so. They know (and so may you) this is your Birth-night into a new world. And we all know (or have been told) that all come crying into the World, when the whole World of Pleasures is before us. The World it self had ne'r been glorious, had it not first been a confused *Chaos*.

Vin. Well: never did *Knight Errants* in all Adventures

A Jovial Crew: or,

ventures, merit more of their Ladies, then we Beggar-errants or errant Beggars, do in ours.

Spr. The greater will be your Reward. Think upon that. And shew no manner of distaste to turn their hearts from you. Y'are undone then.

Hill. Are they ready to appear out of their privy Lodgings, in the Pigs Palace of pleasure? Are they coming forth?

Spr. I left 'em almost ready, sitting on their Pads of straw, helping to dress each others heads (The ones eye is the tothers Looking-glass) with the prettiest coyle they keep to fit their fancies in the most graceful way of wearing their new Dressings, that you would admire.

Vin. I hope we are as gracefully set out. Are we not?

Spr. Indifferent well. But will you fall to practise? Let me hear how you can *Maunder* when you meet with Passengers.

Hill. We do not look like men, I hope, too good to learn.

Spr. Suppose some Persons of Worth or Wealth passing by now. Note me. Good your good Worship, your Charity to the Poor, that will duly and truly pray for you day and night.---

Vin. Away you idle Rogue, you would be set to work and whipt---

Spr. That is lame and sick; hungry and comfortless---

Vin. If you were well serv'd---

Spr. And even to bless you and reward you for it---

Hill. Prethee hold thy peace (here be doleful
Notes

The merry Beggars.

Notes indeed) and leave us to our own *Genius*. If we must beg, let's let it go, as it comes, by Inspiration. I love not your set form of Begging.

Spr. Let me instruct ye tho'.

Enter Rachel and Meriel in Rags.

Ra. Have a care, good *Meriel*, what hearts or limbs soever we have, and tho' never so feeble, let us set our best faces on't, and laugh our last gasp out before we discover any dislike, or weariness to them. Let us bear it out, till they complain first, and beg to carry us home a pick pack.

Mer. I am sorely furbated with hoofing already tho', and so crupper-crampt with our hard lodging, and so humfiddled with the straw, that---

Ra. Think not on't. I am numm'd i' the bum and shoulders too a little. And have found the difference between a hard floor with a little straw, and a down Bed with a Quilt upon't. But no words, nor a sowre look I prethee.

Hill. O here they come now; Madam *Femcloaths*, and my Lady *Bonnyrag*.

Vin. Peace, they see us.

Ra. Mer. Ha ha ha.

Vin. We are glad the Object pleases ye.

Ra. So do's the Subject.

Now you appear the glories of the Spring,
Darlings of *Phæbus* and the Somers heirs.

Hill. How fairer, then faire *Floras* self appear
(To deck the Spring) *Diana's* Darlings dear!

O let us not *Acæon*-like be strook

(With greedy eyes while we presume to look
On your half nakedness, since courteous rags
Cover the rest) into the shape of Stags.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Ra. Mer. Ha ha ha--- Wee are glad you are so merry.

Vin. Merry and lusty too. This night will we lye together as well as the proudest Couple in the Barn.

Hill. And so will we. I can hold out no longer.

Ra. Do's the straw stir up your flesh to't, Gentlemen?

Mer. Or do's your Provender prick you?

Spr. What! do we come for this? laugh and lye down

When your bellies are full. Remember, Ladies,

You have not beg'd yet, to quit your *Destiny*:

But have liv'd hitherto on my endeavours.

Who got your suppers, pray, last night, but I?

Of dainty Trencher-Fees, from a Gentlemans house:

Such as the Serving-men themselves, sometimes,

Would have been glad of. And this morning now,

What comfortable Chippings and sweet Buttermilk

Had you to Breakfast!

Ra. O 'twas excellent! I feel it good still, here.

Mer. There was a brown Crust amongst it, that has made my neck so white me thinks. Is it not *Rachel*?

Ra. Yes. You ga'me none on't. You ever covet to have all the Beauty.

'Tis the ambition of all younger Sisters.

Vin. They are pleas'd, and never like to be weary.

Hill. No more must we, if wee'l be theirs.

Spr. Peace. Here come Pallengers. Forget not your Rules; and quickly disperse your selves, and fall to your Calling---

Enter two Gentlemen.

1. Lead the Horses down the Hill. The heat of
our

The merry Beggars.

our speed is over, for we have lost our Journey.

2. Had they taken this way, we had overtaken 'em, or heard of 'em at least.

1. But some of our Scouts will light on 'em, the whole Countrey being overspread with 'em.

2. There was never such an escape else.

Vin. A search for us perhaps. Yet I know not them, nor they me, I am sure. I might the better beg of 'em. But how to begin, or set the worst leg forwards, would I were whipt if I know now.

1. That a young Gentlewoman of her breeding, and Heire to such an Estate, should flie from so great a Match, and run away with her Uncles Cleark!

2. The old Justice will run mad upon't I fear.

Vin. If I were to be hang'd now, I could not beg for my life.

Spr. Step forwards, and beg handsomly. I'll set my Goad i' your breech else.

Vin. What shall I say?

Spr. Have I not told you? now begin.

Vin. After you, good Springlove.

Spr. Good, your good Worships---

1. Away you idle Vagabond---

Spr. Your Worships Charity to a poore Crytur welly starv'd.

Vin. That will duly and truly prea for yee.

2. You counterfet Villains, hence.

Spr. Good Masters sweet Worship, for the tender mercy of---

Vin. Duly and truly prea for you.

1. You would be well whipt and set to work, if you were duly and truly serv'd.

Vin. Did not I say so before?

Spr.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Spr. Good Worshipful Masters Worship, to bestow your Charity, and---- to maintaine your health and Limbs.

Vin. Duly and truly pray for you.

2. Be gone, I say, you impudent lusty young Rascals.

1. I'll set you going else. *Switch 'em.*

Spr. Ah the goodness of compassion to soften your hearts to the poor.

Vin. Oh the Devil, must not we beat 'em now? steth---

Spr. Nor shew an angry look for all the skin of our backs. Ah the sweetness of that mercy that gives to all, to move your compassion to the hungry, when it shall seem good unto you, and night and day to bless all that you have. Ah ah---

2. Come back sirrah. His Patience and Humility has wrought upon me.

Vin. Duly and---

2. Not you sirrah. The t'other. You look like a sturdy Rogue.

Spr. Lord bless you Masters Worship.

2. There's a half-penny for you. Let him have no share with you.

Vin. I shall never thrive o' this Trade.

1. They are of a Fraternity, and will share, I warrant you.

Spr. Never in our lives trooly. He never begg'd with me before.

1. But if Hedges or Hen-roosts could speak, you might be found sharers in Pillage, I believe.

Spr. Never saw him before, bless you good Master, in all my life. (Beg for your self. Your Credit's gone

The merry Beggars.

gone else.) *Good Hea'ne to blisse and prosper yea. Exit.*

2. Why dost thou follow us? Is it your office to be privie to our talk?

Vin. Sir, I beseech you hear me. (S'lise what shall I say?) I am a stranger in these parts, and destitute of Means and Apparel.

1. So me thinks. And what o' that?

Vin. Will you therefore be pleas'd, as you are worthy Gentlemen, and blest with plenty---

2. This is Courtly!

Vin. Out of your abundant store, towards my relief in extream necessity, to furnish me with a small parcel of Money--- five or six peeces, or ten, if you can presently spare it.

1. 2. Stand off.

Draw.

Vin. I have spoil'd all; and know not how to beg otherwise.

1. Here's a new way of begging!

Vin. Quite run out of my Instructions.

2. Some High-way Thief o' my conscience, that forgets he is weaponless.

Vin. Onely to make you merry, Gentlemen, at my unskilfulness in my new Trade. I have been another man i' my daies. So I kifs your hands. Exit.

1. With your heels do you?

2. It had been good to have apprehended the Rakeshame. There is some mysterie in his Rags. But let him go.

Enter Oliver, putting up his sword.

Ol. You found your legs in time, I had made you halt for something else.

1. Master Oliver, well return'd; what's the matter, Sir?

H

Ol.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Ol. Why, Sir, a counterfeit lame Rogue beg'd of me; but in such Language, the high Sheriffs Son o' the Shire could not have spoke better; nor to have borrowed a greater summe. (He ask'd me if I could spare him ten or twenty pound.) I switch'd him, his Cudgel was up. I drew, and into the Wood he scap'd me, as nimbly--- But first he told me, I should heare from him by a Gentleman, to require satisfaction of me.

2. We had such another beg'd of us. The Court goes a begging, I think.

1. Dropt through the Clouds, I think; more *Lucifers* travailing to Hell, that beg by the way. Met you no news of your Kinswoman, Mistris *Amie*?

Ol. No. What's the matter with her? Goes her Marriage forwards with young Master *Talboy*? I hasten'd my Journey from *London* to be at the Wedding.

2. T'was to ha' bin yesterday morning; all things in readines prepar'd for it. But the Bride, stolne by your Father's Cleark, is slipt away. We were in quest of 'em, and so are twenty more, several waies.

Ol. Such young Wenches will have their owne waies in their own loves, what Matches soever their Guardians make for 'em. And I hope my Father will not follow the Law so close to hang his Cleark for stealing his Ward with her own consent. It may breed such a grudg, may cause some Clearks to hang their Masters, that have 'em o' the hip of injustice. Besides, *Martin* (though he be his servant) is a Gentleman. But, indeed, the miserablest Rascal! He will grudge her Meat when he has her.

1. Your Father is exceedingly troubled at their escape.

The merry Beggars.

escape. I wish that you may qualifie him with your Reasons.

Ol. But what saies *Talboy* to the matter, the Bridegroom, that should ha' been ?

2. Marry he saies little to the purpose; but cries outright.

Ol. I like him well for that : He holds his humour. A miserable wretch too, tho' rich. I ha' known him cry when he ha's lost but three shillings at Mumchance. But, Gentlemen, keep on your way to comfort my Father. I know some of his Man's private haunts about the Countrey here, which I will search immediately.

1. We will accompany you, if you please.

Ol. No, by no means: That will be too publique.

2. Do your pleasure. *Exit 1. 2.*

Ol. My pleasure, and all the search that I intend, is, by hovering here, to take a review of a brace of the handsomest *Beggar-braches* that ever grac'd a Ditch or a Hedge side. I past by 'em in hast, but something so possesies me, that I must--- What the Devil must I? A *Beggar*? Why, *Beggars* are flesh and bloud; and Rags are no Diseases. Their Lice are no French Fleas. And there is much wholsommer flesh under Country Dirt, than City Painting: And less danger in Dirt and Rags, than in Ceruse and Sattin. I durst not take a touch at *London*, both for the present cost, and fear of an after-reckoning. But *Oliver*, dost thou speak like a Gentleman? fear Price or Pox, ha'? Marry do I Sir: Nor can *Beggar-sport* be inexcusable in a young Country Gentleman, short of means, for another respect, a principal one indeed; to avoid the
H 2
punish-

A Jovial Crew : or,

punishment or charge of *Bastardy* : There's no commuting with them; or keeping of Children for them. The poor Whores, rather than part with their own, or want children at all, will steal other folks, to travel with, and move compassion. He feeds a Beggar-wench well that fills her belly with young bones. And these reasons considered, good Master *Oliver*--- s'lid yonder they are at peep. And now sitten downe as waiting for my purpose. *Ent. Vinc.* Heart here's another delay. I must shift him. Dost heare honest poor fellow? I prethee go back presently : and at the hill foot (here's sixpence for thy paines) thou shalt finde a Footman with a Horse in his hand. Bid him wait there. His Master will come presently, say.

Vin. Sir, I have a business of another nature to you. Which (as I presume you are a Gentleman of right Noble Spirit and Resolution) you will receive without offence; and in that temper as most properly appertains to the most *Heroick* natures.

Ol. Thy Language makes me wonder at thy Person. What's the matter with thee? quickly.

Vin. You may be pleas'd to call to minde a late affront, which, in your heat of passion, you gave a Gentleman.

Ol. What, such a one as thou art, was he?

Vin. True noble Sir. Who could no less in Honour, then direct me, his chosen Friend, unto you, with the length of his Sword, or to take the length of yours. The place, if you please, the Ground whereon you parted; the houre, seven the next morning : Or, if you like not these, in part, or all, to make your own appointments.

Ol.

The merry Beggars.

Ol. The bravest Method in *Beggars*, thar ever was discovered! I would be upon the bones of this Rogue now, but for crossing my other designe, which fires me. I must therefore be rid of him on any terms. Let his owne Appointments stand. Tell him I'll meet him.

Vin. You shall most nobly ingage his life to serve you, Sir.

Ol. You'll be his Second, will you?

Vin. To do you further Service, Sir, I have undertaken it.

Ol. I'll send a Beadle shall undertake you both.

Vin. Your Mirth becomes the bravery of your minde and dauntless Spirit. So takes his leave your Servant, Sir.

Ol. I think, as my Friend said, the Court goes a begging indeed. But I must not lose my Beggar-wench-
Enter Rachel and Meriel.

Oh here they come. They are delicately skin'd and limb'd. There, there, I saw above the ham as the wind blew. Now they spie me.

Ra. Sir, I beseech you look upon us with the favour of a Gentleman. We are in a present distress, and utterly unacquainted in these parts; and therefore forc'd by the Calamity of our mis-fortune, to implore the Courtesie, or rather Charity, of those to whom we are strangers.

Ol. Very fine, this!

Mer. Be therefore pleas'd, right noble Sir, not onely valuing us by our outward Habits, which cannot but appear loathsome or despicable unto you, but as we are forlorn Christians; and, in that estimation, be compassionately moved to cast a handful or two of your Silver, or a few of your Golden Pieces

A Jovial Crew: or,

unto us, to furnish us with Linen, and some decent Habilliments---

Ol. They beg as high as the Man-beggar I met withal! sure the Beggars are all mad to day, or bewitched into a Language they understand not. The spirits of some decay'd Gentry talk in 'em sure.

Ra. May we expect a gracious Answer from you Sir?

Mer. And that as you can wish our Virgine Prayers to be propitious for you.

Ra. That you never be deny'd a Suit by any Mistriſs.

Mer. Nay, that the faireſt may be ambitious to place their favours on you.

Ra. That your Virtue and Valour may lead you to the moſt honourable Actions; and that the Love of all exquisite Ladies may arm you.

Mer. And that, when you pleaſe to take a wife, may Honour, Beauty, and Wealth, contend to endow her moſt with.

Ra. And that with her you have a long and proſperous life.

Mer. A faire and fortunate Poſterity.

Ol. This exceeds all that ever I heard, and ſtrikes me into wonder. Pray tell me how long have you been Beggars; or how chanc'd you to be ſo?

Ra. By influence of our Stars, Sir.

Mer. We were born to no better Fortune.

Ol. How came you to talk thus, and ſo much above the Beggars Dialect?

Ra. Our ſpeech came naturally to us, and we ever lov'd to learn by wrote as well as we could.

Mer. And to be ambitious above the vulgar, to ask

The merry Beggars.

aske more then common Alms, what ere men please to give us.

Ol. Sure some well disposed Gentleman, as my self, got these Wenches. They are too well growne to be mine owne, and I cannot be incestuous with 'em.

Ra. Pray Sir your noble bounty.

Ol. What a tempting lip that little Rogue moves there! and what an inticing eye the 'tother. I know not which to begin with. What's this a flea upon thy bosome?

Mer. Is it not a straw colour'd one, Sir?

Ol. O what a provoking *skin* is there! that very touch inflames me.

Ra. Sir, are you mov'd in charity towards us yet?

Ol. Mov'd? I am mov'd. No flesh and blood more mov'd.

Mer. Then pray Sir your Benevolence.

Ol. Benevolence? which shall I be benovolent to; or which first? I am puffell'd in the choice. Would some sworne Brother of mine were here to draw a Cut with me.

Ra. Sir, Noble Sir.

Ol. First let me tell you, *Damsels*, I am bound by a strong vow to kisse all of the woman sex I meet this morning.

Mer. Beggars and all Sir?

Ol. All, all. Let not your coynesse cross a Gentlemans vow, I beseech you---

Kisse.

Ra. You will tell now.

Ol. Tell quoth a! I could tell a thousand on those Lips--- and as many upon those. What life restoring breaths they have! Milke from the Cow steams not so sweetly. I must lay one of 'em aboard; both if my tackling hold.

Ra.

A Jovial Crew : or,

Ra. Mer. Sir. Sir.

Ol. But how to bargain, now, will be the doubt. They that beg so high as by the handfulls, may expect for price above the rate of good mens wives.

Ra. Now, will you, Sir, be pleas'd?

Ol. With all my heart, Sweetheart. And I am glad thou knowest my minde. Here is twelve-pence a peece for you.

Ra. Me. We thank you, Sir.

Ol. That's but in earnest. I'll Jest away the rest with yee. Look here---All this. Come, you know my meaning. Dost thou look about thee, Sweet little One? I like thy care. There's nobody coming. But we'll get behind these Bushes. I know you keep each others Counsels----Must you be drawn to't? Then I'll pull. Come away---

Ra. Me. Ah ah---

Enter Springlove, Vincent, Hilliard.

Vin. Let's beat his brains out.

Ol. Come leave your squealing.

Ra. O you hurt my hand.

Hill. Or cut the Lechers throat.

Spr. Would you be hang'd? Stand back. Let me alone.

Mer. You shall not pull us so.

Spr. O do not hurt 'em, Master.

Ol. Hurt 'em? I meant 'hem but too well. Shall I be so prevented?

Spr. They be but young and simple. And if they have offended, let not your Worships own hands drag 'em to the Law, or carry 'em to Punishment. Correct 'em not your self. It is the Beadles Office.

Ol. Do you talk Shake-rag : Heart yond's more
of

The merry Beggars.

of 'em. I shall be Beggar-mawl'd if I stay. Thou
saist right, honest fellow, there's a Tester for thee.

Exit. running.

Vin. He is prevented, and asham'd of his purpose.

Spr. Nor were we to take notice of his purpose
more than to prevent it.

Hill. True, politique *Springlove*, 'twas better his
own fear quit us of him, than our force.

Ra. Look you here, Gentlemen, twelvepence a
peece.

Mer. Besides fair offers and large promises. What
ha' you got to day, Gentlemen?

Vin. More then (as we are Gentlemen) we would
have taken.

Hil. Yet we put it up in your Service.

Ra. Mer. Ha ha ha. Switches and kicks. Ha ha
ha----

Spr. Talk not here of your gettings. We must quit
this Quarter. The eager Gentlemans repulse may
arm and return him with revenge upon us. We must
therefore leap Hedge and Ditch now; through the
Briers and Myres, till we scape out of this Libertie,
to our next *Rendezvous*; where we shall meet the
Crew, and then, *hay tosse* and laugh all night.

Mer. As we did last night.

Ra. Hold out, *Meriel*.

Mer. Lead on, brave *Generall*.

to Spr.

Vin. What shall we do? They are in heart still.
Shall we go on?

Hil. There's no flinching back, you see.

Spr. Besides, if you beg no better then you begin,
in this lofty Fashion, you cannot scape the Jayle, or
the whip, long.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Vin. To tell you true, 'tis not the least of my purpose, to work means for our discovery, to be releas'd out of our Trade.

Enter Martin and Amie in poor Habits.

Spr. Stay, here come more Passengers. Single your selves agen, and fall to your Calling discreetly.

Hill. I'll single no more. If you'll beg in full cry I am for you.

Mer. I that will be fine; let's charm all together.

Spr. Stay first and list a little.

Mar. Be of good cheer, Sweetheart, we have escap'd hitherto: And I believe that all the Search is now retir'd, and we may safely passe forwards.

Am. I should be safe with thee. But that's a most lying Proverb, that saies, Where *Love* is, there's no Lack. I am faint, and cannot travail further without Meat; and if you lov'd me, you would get me some.

Mar. We'll venter at the next Village to call for some. The best is, we want no Money.

Am. We shall be taken then, I fear. I'll rather pine to death.

Mar. Be not so fearfull. Who can know us in these Clownish Habits?

Am. Our Cloaths, indeed, are poor enough to beg with. Would I could beg, so it were of Strangers that could not know me, rather then buy of those that would betray us.

Mar. And yonder be some that can teach us.

Spr. These are the young couple of Run-away Lovers disguiz'd, that the Country is so laid for. Observe and follow now. Now the Lord to come with ye, good loving Master and Maystresse, your blessed Charity to the poor, lame and sick, weak and comfortlesse, that will night and day---
All.

The merry Beggars.

All. Duly and truly pray for you. Duly and truly pray for you.

Spr. Pray hold your peace, and let me alone. Good young Master and Mistris, a little Comfort amongst us all, and to blesse you where e're you go, and

All. Duly and truly pray for you. Duly and truly---

Spr. Pray do not use me thus. Now sweet young Master and Mistris, to look upon your Poor, that have no relief or succour, no bread to put in our heads.

Vin. Wouldst thou put Bread in thy Braines?

No Lands or Livings.

Spr. No House nor home; nor covering from the cold; no health, no help but your sweet Charity.

Mer. No Bands or Shirts but losse on our backs.

Hil. No smocks or Petticoats to hide our Scratches.

Ra. No Shooes to our Legs, or Hofs to our Feet.

Vin. No Skin to our Flesh, nor Flesh to our Bones shortly.

Hill. If we follow the Devil that taught us to beg.

All. Duly and truly pray for you.

Spr. I'll run away from you if you beg a stroak more. Good worshipfull Master and Mistris---

Mar. Good Friend forbear. Here is no Master or Mistris. We are poor Folks. Thou seest no Worship upon our backs, I am sure. And for within, we want as much as you, and would as willingly beg, if we knew how as well.

Spr. Alack for pittie. You may have enough. And what I have is yours, if you'll accept it. 'Tis wholesome Food from a good Gentlemans Gate--- Alas good Mistris--- Much good do your heart. How favourly she feeds!

All together.

A Jovial Crew : or,

Mar. What do you mean; to poyson your self?

Am. Do you shew Love in grudging me?

Mar. Nay, if you think it hurts you not, fall too. I'll not beguile you. And here, mine Host, something towards your Reckoning.

Am. This Beggar is an *Angell* sure !

Spr. Nothing by way of bargain, gentle Master. 'Tis against Order, and will never thrive. But pray, Sir, your reward in Charity.

Mar. Here then in Charity. This fellow would never make a Cleark.

Spr. What ! All this, Master ?

Am. What is it ? Let me see't.

Spr. 'Tis a whole silver three-pence, Mistresse.

Am. For shame, ingratefull Miser. Here Friend, a golden Crown for thee.

Spr. Bountifull Goodnesse ! Gold ? If I thought a dear yeer were coming, I would take a Farm now.

Am. I have rob'd thy Partners of their shares too. There's a Crown more for them.

4. Duly and truly pray for you.

Mar. What have you done ? lesse would have serv'd. And your Bounty will betray us.

Am. Fie on your wretched policy.

Spr. No, no good Master. I knew you all this while, and my sweet Mistris too. And now I'll tell you. The Search is every way ; the Country all laid for you. 'Tis well you staid here. Your Habits, were they but a little neerer our Fashion, would secure you with us. But are you married, Master and Mistris ? Are you joyned in Matrimony ? In heart I know you are. And I will (if it please you) for your great bounty, bring you to a Curate, that
lacks

The merry Beggars.

lacks no Licence, nor has any Living to lose, that shall put you together.

Mar. Thou art a heavenly Beggar!

Spr. But he is so scrupulous, and severely precise, that unlesse you, Mistris, will affirm that you are with Child by the Gentleman; or that you have, at least, cleft or slept together (as he calls it) he will not marry you. But if you have lyen together, then 'tis a case of necessity, and he holds himself bound to do it.

Mar. You may say you have.

Am. I would not have it so, nor make that lye against my self for all the World.

Spr. That I like well, and her exceedingly. *Aside* I'll do my best for you however.

Mar. I'll do for thee, that--- thou shalt never beg more.

Spr. That cannot be purchas'd scarce for the price of your Mistris. Will you walk, Master?--- We use no Complements.

Am. By inforc'd Matches Wards are not set free
So oft, as sold into Captivitie:
Which made me, fearlesse, fly from one I hate,
Into the hazard of a harder Fate.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Actus Quartus. Scena Prima.

Enter Talboy. Oliver. With riding Switches.

Tal. **S**He's gone. *Amie* is gone. Ay me she's gone,
And has me left of joy bereft, to make my
mone. O me, *Amie*.

Ol. What the Devil ayles the Fellow tro? why!
why Master *Talboy*; my Cozen *Talboy* that should 'st
ha' been, art not asham'd to cry at this growth? and
for a thing that's better lost then found; a Wench?

Tal. Cry! who cries? do I cry; or look with a
crying Countenance? I scorn it; and scorn to think
on her, but in just anger.

Ol. So, this is brave now, if 'twould hold.

Tall. Nay it shall hold. And so let her go, for a
fcurvy what d'e call't; I know not what bad enough
to call her.--- But something of mine goes with
her I am sure. She has cost me in Gloves, Ribands,
Scarfs, Rings, and such like things, more than I am
able to speak of at this time---Oh.

Ol. Because thou canst not speak for crying. Fy
Master *Talboy*, agen?

Tal. I scorn it agen, and any man that saies I cry,
or will cry agen. And let her go agen; and what she
has of mine let her keep, and hang her self, and the
Rogue that's with her. I have enough; and am
Heire of a well-known Estate, and that she knows--
And therefore that she should sleight me, and run
away with a wages-fellow, that is but a petty Cleark
and a Serving-man. There's the vexation of it--Oh
there's the grief, and the vexation of it--Oh---

Ol.

The merry Beggars.

Ol. Now he will cry his eyes out ! You Sir. This life have I had with you all our long journey; which now is at an end here. This is Master *Oldrents* house, where perhaps we shall finde old *Hearty*, the Uncle of that Rogue *Martin*, that is run away with your Sweetheart.

Tal. I 'tis too true, too true, too true. You need not put me in minde on't--Oh--O--

Ol. Hold your peace and minde me. Leave your bawling, for fear I give you correction. This is the House I say, where it is most likely we shall hear of your Mistris and her companion. Make up your face quickly. Here comes one of the Servants, I suppose.

Enter Randall.

Shame not your self for ever, and me for company. Come, be confident.

Tal. As confident as your self or any man---But my poor heart feels what lies here. Here. I here it is, O---

Ol. Good morrow, Friend. This is Squire *Oldrents* House, I take it.

Ran. Pray take it not, Sir, before it be to be let. It has been my Masters, and his Ancestors in that Name, above these three hundred yeers, as our House Chronicle doth notifie ; and not yet to be let. But as a Friend, or Stranger, in Guest-wise, you are welcome to it ; as all other Gentlemen are, far and neer, to my good Master, as you will finde anon when you see him.

Ol. Thou speak'st wittily and honestly. But I prethee, good Friend, let our Nags be set up : they are tied up at the post. You belong to the Stable, do you not?

Ran.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Ran. Not so much, as the Stable belongs to me, Sir. I passe through many Offices of the House, Sir. I am the running *Bayley* of it.

Ol. We have rid hard, hoping to finde the *Squire* at home at this early time in the morning.

Ran. You are deceiv'd in that, Sir. He has been out these four hours. He is no *Snayle*, Sir. You do not know him, I perceive, since he has been new moulded. But I'll tell you, because you are Gentlemen.

Ol. Our Horses, good Friend.

Ran. My Master is an ancient Gentleman, and a great House-keeper; and praid for by all the Poore in the Countrey. He keeps a Guest-house for all *Beggars*, far and neer, costs him a hundred a yeer, at least; and is as well belov'd among the Rich. But, of late, he fell into a great Melancholly, upon what, I know not: for he had then more cause to be merry than he has now. Take that by the way.

Ol. But good Fiend, our Horses.

Ran. For he had two Daughters, that knew well to order a House, and give entertainment to Gentlemen. They were his *Houſe-Doves*. But now they are flowne; and no man knows how, why, or whither.

Tall. My *Dove* is flown too. Oh---

Ran. Was she your Daughter, Sir? She was a young one then, by the Beard you wear.

Tall. What she was, she was, d'ee see. I scorn to think on her--But I do--Oh.

Ol. Pray hold your peace, or feign some mirth, if you can.

Sing. Tal. Let her go, let her go. *I care not if I have*

The merry Beggars.

have her, I have her or no. Ha ha ha--- Oh my heart will break--- Oh---

Ol. Pray think of our horses, Sir.

Ran. This is right my Master. When he had his Daughters he was sad; and now they are gone, he is the merriest man alive. Up at five a Clock in the morning, and out till Dinner-time. Out agen at afternoon, and so till Supper-time. Skife out this away, and skife out that away. (He's no *Snayle* I assure you.) And *Tantivy* all the Country over, where Hunting, Hawking, or any Sport is to be made, or good Fellowship to be had; and so merry upon all occasions, that you would even blesse your self, if it were possible.

Ol. Our Horses, I prethee.

Ran. And we, his Servants, live as merrily under him; and do all thrive. I my self was but a silly Lad when I came first, a poor turn-spit Boy. Gentlemen kept no whirling Jacks then, to cozen poor People of Meat. And I have now, without boast, 40*l.* in my Purse, and am the youngest of half a score in the House, none younger then my self but one; and he is the Steward over all; his name is Master *Spring-love* (blesse him where ere he is) he has a world of means: And we, the Underlings, get well the better by him; besides the Rewards many Gentlemen give us, that fare well, and lodge here sometimes.

Ol. O! we shall not forget you, Friend, if you remember our Horses, before they take harm.

Ran. No hurt, I warrant you: there's a Lad walking them.

Ol. Is not your Master coming, think you?

Ran. He will not be long a coming. He's no *Snayle*, as I told you.

K

Ol.

A Jovial Crew : or,

Ol. You told me so, indeed.

Ran. But of all the Gentlemen, that toss up the Ball, yea and the *Sack* too, commend me to old Master *Hearty* ; a decay'd Gentleman ; lives most upon his own Mirth, and my Masters Means, and much good do him with it : He is the finest Companion of all : He do'es so hold my Master up with Stories, and Songs, and Catches, and t'other Cup of Sack, and such Tricks and Jiggs, you would admire--- He is with him now.

Ol. That *Hearty* is *Martins* Uncle. I am glad he is here. Bear up *Talboy*. Now, Friend, pray let me ask you a question.--- Prethee stay.

Ran. Nay, marry I dare not. Your Yawdes may take cold, and never be good after it.--- *Exit.*

Ol. I thought I should never have been rid of him. But no sooner desir'd to stay, but he is gone. A pretty humour !

Enter Randall.

Ran. Gentlemen, my Master will be here e'ne now, doubt not : for he is no *Snayle*, as I told you. *Exit.*

Ol. No *Snayle's* a great word with him. Prethee *Talboy* bear up. *Enter Usher.* Here comes another gray Fellow.

Ush. Do you stand in the Porch, Gentlemen ? the House is open to you. Pray enter the Hall. I am the Usher of it.

Ol. In good time, Sir. We shall be bold here, then, to attend your Masters coming.

Ush. And he's upon coming ; and when he comes he comes apace. He is no *Snayle*, I assure you.

Ol. I was told so before, Sir. No *Snayle* ! sure 'tis the

The merry Beggars.

the word of the House, and as ancient as the Family.

Ush. This Gentleman looks sadly, me thinks.

Tal. Who I? not I. Pray pardon my looks for that. But my heart feels what's what. Ay me---

Ush. Pray walk to the Buttry, Gentlemen. My Office leads you thither.

Ol. Thanks, good Master Usher.

Ush. I have been Usher these twenty yeers, Sir. And have got well by my place, for using Strangers respectfully.

Ol. He has given the Hint too.

Ush. Something has come in by the by, besides standing Wages, which is ever duly paid (thank a good Master, and an honest Steward) Heaven bleſſe hem. We all thrive under 'em.

Enter Butler with Glasses and a Napkin.

O here comes the Butler.

But. You are welcome, Gentlemen. Please yee draw neerer my Office, and take a morning Drink in a Cup of Sack, if it please you.

Ol. In what please you, Sir. We cannot deny the curtesie of the House, in the Masters absence.

But. He'll come apace when he comes. He's no *Snayle*, Sir. *Going.*

Ol. Still 'tis the House-word. And all the Servants wear Livery-Beards.

But. Or perhaps you had rather drink Whitewine and Sugar. Please your selves, Gentlemen; here you may taste all Liquors. No Gentlemans House in all this County, or the next, so well stor'd (--make us thankfull for it.) And my Master, for his Hospitality to Gentlemen, his Charity to the Poor, and his bounty to his Servants, has not his Peer in the

A Jovial Crew: or,

Kingdom (---make us thankful for it.) And 'tis as fortunate a House for Servants, as ever was built upon *Faery-Ground*. I my self, that have serv'd here, Man, and Boy, these four and forty yeers, have gotten together (besides something, more then I will speak of, distributed among my poor Kinred) by my Wages, my Vails at *Christmas*, and otherwise, together with my Rewards of kinde Gentlemen, that have found courteous entertainment here---

Ol. There he is too.

But. Have, I say, gotten together (tho' in a dangerous time I speak it) a brace of hundred pounds--- Make me thankfull for it. And for losses, I have had none. I have been Butler these two and thirty yeers, and never lost the value of a Silver Spoon, nor ever broke a Glasse---Make me thankfull for it. White Wine and Sugar, say you Sir?

Ol. Please your self, Sir.

But. This Gentleman speaks not. Or had you rather take a Drink of brown Ale with a Toast, or March Beer with Sugar and Nutmeg? or had you rather drink without Sugar?

Ol. Good Sir, a Cup of your Household-Beer.

Exit. But.

I fear he will draw down to that at last.

Enter Butler with a Silver Can of Sack.

But. Here, Gentlemen, is a Cup of my Masters small Beer: But it is good old *Canary*, I assure you. And here's to your welcome.

Enter Cooke.

Cook. And welcome the Cooke sayes, Gentlemen. Brother Butler, lay a Napkin, I'll fetch a Cut of the *Surloyn* to strengthen your patience till my Master comes,

The merry Beggars.

comes, who will not now be long, for he's no *Snayle*,
Gentlemen.

Ol. I have often heard so. And here's to you, Ma-
ster Cook---Prithee speak, Master *Talboy*, or force
one Laugh more, if thou canst.

Cook. Sir, the Cook drinks to you. *To Talb.*

Tal. Ha ha ha---

Ol. Well said.

Tal. He is in the same Livory-Beard too.

Coo. But he is the oldest Cook, and of the ancient-
est House, and the best for House-keeping, in this
County, or the next. And tho' the Master of it
write but *Squire*, I know no Lord like him. *Enter*

Chaplain. And now he's come. Here comes the
Word before him. The *Parson* has ever the best sto-
mack. I'll Dish away presently. *Exit.*

But. Is our Master come, Sir *Domine*?

Chap. *Est ad Manum. Non est ille testudo.*

Ol. He has the Word too in *Latine*. Now bear up
Talboy,

Cha. Give me a Preparative of Sack. It is a gentle
Preparative before Meat. And so a gentle touch of
it to you Gentlemen.

Ol. It is a gentle Offer, Sir; and as gently to be
taken.

Enter Oldrents and Hearty.

Old. About with it, my Lads. And this is as it
should be.--- Not till my turn, Sir, I. Though, I
confesse, I have had but three Morning-draughts to
day.

Ol. Yet it appears you were abroad betimes, Sir.

Old. I am no *Snayle*, Sir.

Ol. So your men told us, Sir.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Old. But where be my *Catchers*? Come, a *Round*.
And so let us drink.

*The Catch sung. And they drink about. The Singers
are all Graybeards.*

A *Round, a Round, a Round, Boyes, a Round.*
Let Mirth fly aloft, and Sorrow be drown'd.
Old Sack, and old Songs, and a Merry old Crew,
Can charm away Cares when the Ground looks blew.

Old. Well said old *Hearty*. And, Gentlemen, welcome.

Tal. Ah---

He sighs.

Old. Oh mine ears! What was that, a sigh? And in my House? Look: has it not split my Walls? If not, make vent for it: Let it out: I shall be stifled else.

Exit. Chap.

Ol. He hopes your pardon, Sir: his Cause consider'd.

Old. Cause? Can there be cause for sighing.

Ol. He has lost his *Mistress*, Sir.

Old. Hā ha ha. Is that a Cause? Do you hear me complain the loss of my two Daughters?

Ol. They are not lost, I hope Sir.

Old. No more can be his *Mistress*. No Woman can be lost. They may be mis-laid a little: but found again, I warrant you.

Tal. Ah---

Sigh.

Old. Ods my life! He sighs again: And means to blow me out of my House. To Horse again. Here's no dwelling for me. Or stay: I'll cure him, if I can. Give him more Sack, to drown his Suspirations.

While

The merry Beggars.

*While Oldrents and Talboy drink, Oliver takes
Hearty aside.*

Ol. Sir, I am chiefly to inform you of the Dis-
after.

Hea. May it concern me?

Old. Your Nephew *Martin* has stolne my Fathers
Ward, that Gentlemans *Bride* that should have been.

Hea. Indeed, Sir.

Ol. 'Tis most true--- *He gives Hearty a Letter.*

Hea. Another Glasse of *Sack*. This Gentleman
brings good news.

Ol. Sir, if you can prevent his danger---

Hea. Hang all Preventions. Let 'em have their
Destiny.

Tal. Sir, I should have had her, 'tis true--- *To*
But she is gone, d'ee see? And let her go. *Oldrents.*

Old. Well said. He mends now.

Tal. I am glad I am rid of her (d'ee see) before I
had more to do with her---

Hea. He mends apace.

Hearty reads the Letter.

Tal. For should I have married her before she had
run away, d'ee see : And that she had run away (d'ee
see) after she had bin married to me (d'ee see.) Then
I had been a married Man without a Wife (d'ee see.)
Where now she being run away before I am married
(d'ee see) I am no more married to her, d'ee see,
then she to me, d'ee see. And so long as I am none of
hers (d'ee see) nor she none of mine (d'ee see) I
ought to care as little for her, now she is run away
(d'ee see) as if she had stay'd with me, d'ee see.

Old. Why this is excellent ! Come hither *Hearty*.

Tal. I perceive it now ; and the reason of it ; And
how

A Jovial Crew: or,

how, by Consequence (d'ee see) I ought not to look any further after her. *Cryes.* But that she

should respect a poor base fellow, a Cleark at the most, and a Servingman at best, before me, that am a rich man, at the worst; and a Gentleman, at least, makes me--- I know not what to say---

Old. Worse than ever 'twas! Now he cries outright.

Tal. I know not what to say---What to say--- Oh---

Hea. Then I do, Sir. The poore base Fellow, that you speak of, is my Nephew: As good a Gentleman as your self. I understand the businesse by your Friend here.

Tal. I cry you mercy, Sir.

Old. You shall cry no Mercy, nor any thing else here, Sir; nor for any thing here, Sir. This is no place to cry in: Nor for any businesse. You, Sir, that come on businesse--

To Ol.

Ol. It shall be none, Sir.

Old. My House is for no businesse, but the Belly-businesse. You finde not me so uncivill, Sir, as to ask you from whence you came; who you are; or what's your businesse. I ask you no question. And can you be so discourteous, as to tell me, or my Friend, any thing like businesse. If you come to be merry with Me, you are welcome. If you have any businesse, forget it: You forget where you are else. And so to Dinner.

Hea. Sir, I pray let me onely prevail with you but to reade this.

Old. Spoyle my Stomack now, and I'll not eat this fortnight.

He reads aside.

Hea.

The merry Beggars.

Hea. While he reads, let me tell you, Sir. That my Nephew *Martin* has stolne that Gentlemans Mistress, it seems, is true. But I protest, as I am a Gentleman, I know nothing of the matter; nor where he or she is. But, as I am the foresaid Gentleman, I am glad on't with all my heart. Ha, my Boy *Mat*. Thou shalt restore our *House*.

Ol. Let him not hear, to grieve him, Sir.

Hea. Grieve him? What should he do with her; teach their Children to cry?

Tal. But I do hear you though; and I scorn to cry, as much as you, d'ee see, or your Nephew either, d'ee see.

Hea. Now thou art a brave fellow. So, so, hold up thy head, and thou shalt have a Wife, and a fine Thing.

Tal. Hang a Wife; and Pax o' your fine Thing (d'ee see) I scorn your Fopperies, d'ee see.

Old. And I do hear thee, my Boy; and rejoyce in thy conversion. If thou canst but hold now.

Tal. Yes, I can hold, Sir. And I hold well with your Sack. I could live and die with it, as I am true *Talboy*.

Old. Now thou art a tall Fellow; and shalt want no Sack.

Tal. And, Sir, I do honour you (d'ee see) and should wish my self one of your Household Servants (d'ee see) if I had but a gray Beard, d'ee see? *Hay*, as old Master *Clack* says.

Old. Well, I have read the businesse here.

Ol. Call it not businesse, I beseech you, Sir. We desie all businesse.

Tal. I marry do we, Sir. D'ee see, Sir? And a

A Jovial Crew: or,

Hay, as old Master *Clack* says.

Old. Grammercy Sack. Well, I have read the Matter here written by Master *Clack*, And do but bear up in thy humour, I will wait upon thee home.

Knock within.

Heark! they knock to the Dresser. I have heard much of this old od-ceited Justice *Clack*: And now I long to see him. 'Tis but crossing the Countrey two daies and a nights Journey. We'll but dine and away presently. Bear up, I say, Master *Talboy*.

Tal. I will bear up, I warrant you, d'ee see, Sir---
But here's a grudging still--- *Exeunt.*

Scena Secunda.

A great noyse within of rude Musick, Laughing, Singing, &c.

Enter Amie. Rachel. Merial.

Am. **H**ere's a Wedding with a witnesse, and a Holy-day with a hoigh. Let us out of the noyse, as we love our ears.

Ra. Yes: and here we may pursue our own Discourse, and hear one another.

Mer. Concerning *Springlove* and your self, Mistris *Amie*.

Am. Well, Ladies, my confidence in you, that you are the same that you have protested your selves to be, hath so far won upon me, that I confesse my self well-affected both to the Mind and Person of that *Springlove*. And, if he be (as fairly you pretend) a *Gentleman*, I shall easily dispense with *Fortune*.

Ra.

The merry Beggars.

Ra. Me. He is, upon our *Honours*.

Am. How well that high Engagement suits your Habits.

Ra. Our Minds and Blood are still the same.

Am. I have past no affiance to the other,
That stole me from my Guardian, and the Match
He would have forc'd me to : From which I would
Have fled with any, or without a Guide.
Besides, his minde, more clownish than his Habit,
Deprav'd by Covetousnesse and Cowardise,
Forc'd me into a way of misery,
To take relief from *Beggars*.

Mer. From poore Us.

Am. And then, to offer to marry me under a
Hedge, as the old Couple were to day, without
Book or Ring, by the Chaplain of the *Beggars* Regi-
ment, your *Patrico*, onely to save Charges.

Ra. I have not seen the Wretch these three hours,
whither is he gone ?

Am. He told me, to fetch Horse and fit Raiment
for us ; and so to post me hence : But I think it was
to leave me on your hands.

Mer. He has taken some great distaste sure : For
he is damnable jealous.

Ra. I, didst thou mark what a wilde look he cast,
when *Springlove* tumbled her, and kist her on the
Straw this morning, while the Musick plaid to the
old Wedding-Folks ?

Mer. Yes, and then *Springlove*, to make him mad-
der, told him, that he would be his *Proxie*, and mar-
ry her for him, and lie with her the first night, with
a naked Cudgell betwixt 'em, and make him a King
of *Beggars*.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Am. I saw how it anger'd him. And I imagin'd then, and before, that there was more in *Springlove*, then downright *Beggar*. But tho' he be never so good a Gentleman, he shall observe fit time and distance till we are married.

Ra. Matrimony forbid else. (She's taken.) But while we talk of a Match towards, we are mist within in the *Bride-Barn* among the *Revell rout*.

Am. We have had all the sport they could make us, in the past passages.

Mer. How cautious the old contracted Couple were for Portion and jointure!

Ra. What Feoffees, she being an Heire of fourescore, (and seven yeers stone-blinde) had, in trust for her Estate.

Am. And how carefully he secur'd all to himself, in case he out-liv'd her, being but seven yeers older then she. And what pains the Lawyer of the Rout here, took about it.

Ra. And then, how solemnly they were joyn'd, and admonish'd, by our *Parson Under-bedge*, to live together in the fear of the Lash, and give good example to the younger Reprobates, to beg within Compasse, to escape the jaws of the Justice, the Clutch of the Constable, the Hooks of the Headborough, and the biting blows of the Beadle. And, in so doing, they should defie the Devill, and all his Works, and after their painfull Pilgrimage in this life, they should die in the Ditch of Delight.

Mer. O but Poet Scribble's *Epithalamium*.

TO the blinde Virgin of fourscore,
And the lame Batchelor, of more,

How

The merry Beggars.

*How Cupid gave her Eyes to see,
And Vulcan lent him Legs :
How Venus caus'd their Sport to be
Prepar'd with butter'd Eggs.
Yet when she shall be seven yeers wed,
She shall be bold to say,
She has as much her Maiden-head,
As on her Wedding day.*

Ra. So may some Wives that were married at sixteen, to Lads of one and twenty.

Am. But at the Wedding-Feast, when the Bride bridled it, and her Groome saddled it. There was the sport, in her Mumping, and his Champing; the *Crew* scrambling; our selves trembling; then the confusion of *Noyse*, in talking, laughing, scolding, singing, howling; with their Actions, of snatching, scratching, towing and lousing themselves, and one another--

Enter Springl. Vinc. and Hilliard.

But who comes here?

Spr. O, Ladies, you have lost as much Mirth, as would have fill'd up a week of Holy-daies.

*Springlove takes Amie aside, and courts her
in a gentle way.*

Vin. I am come about agen for the *Beggars* life now.

Ra. You are. I am glad on't.

Hill. There is no life but it. (plexity;

Vin. With them there is no Grievance or Per-
No fear of war, or State Disturbances.
No Alteration in a Common-wealth,

A Jovial Crew: or,

Or Innovation, shakes a Thought of theirs.

Mer. Of ours you should say.

Hil. Of ours, he means.

We have no fear of lessening our Estates;
Nor any grudge with us (without Taxation)
To lend or give, upon command, the whole
Strength of our Wealth for publick Benefit:
While some, that are held rich in their Abundance,
(Which is their Misery, indeed) will see
Rather a generall ruine upon all,
Then give a Scruple to prevent the Fall.

Vin. 'Tis onely we that live.

Ra. I'm glad you are so taken with your Calling.

Mer. We are no lesse, I assure you. We finde the
Sweetnesse of it now.

Ra. The Mirth, the Pleasure, the Delights. No
Ladies live such Lives.

Mer. Some few, upon necessity, perhaps. But that's
not worth g'rammercy.

Vin. They will never be weary.

Hil. Whether we seem to like, or dillike, all's one
to them.

Vin. We must do something to be taken by, and
discovered, we shall never be our selves, and get
home again else.

Spr. and Amie come to the rest.

Spr. I am yours for ever. Well, Ladies, you have
mist rare Sport; but now the Bride has mist you
with her half-half eye; and the Bridegroom, with
the help of his Crutches, is drawing her forth for a
Daunce, here, in the opener aire. The House is now
too hot for 'em. O, here come the chief Revellers.
The Souldier, the Courtier, the Lawyer, and the Poet,
who

The merry Beggari.

who is Master of their Revels, before the old Couple
in State. Attend, and hear him speak, as their Indu-
ctor.

Poet.

Here, on this Green, like King and Queen,
(For a short truce) we do produce
Our old new-married Pair.
Of Dish and Wallet, and of Straw-pallet,
With Rags to show, from top to toe,
She is the ancient Heire.

He is the Lord of Bottle-gourd,
Of Sachell great, for Bread and Meat,
And, for small Pence, a Purse.
To all that give, Long may you live
He loudly cries: But who denies
Is sure to have his Curse.

Vin. Well said Field-Poet. Phœbus, we see, inspires
As well the Beggar, as the Poet Laureat.

Spr. And shines as warm under a Hedge bottom,
as on the tops of Palaces.

Po. I have not done yet. Now this is to incite you
to daunce.

Prepare your selves, like Faëry Elves,
Now in a Daunce to show,
That you approve, the God of Love
Has many Shafts to'r Bow:

With Golden head, and some of Lead,
But that which made these feel,
By subtil craft, was sure a Shaft
That headed was with Steel.

For

A Jovial Crew: or,

*For they were old; no Earth more cold;
Their Hearts were Flints intire;
Whence the Steels stroak did sparks provoke,
That set their Bloods on fire.*

*Now strike up Piper; and each Lover here
Be blith, and take his Mistris by the Goll.*

Hil. That's no Rime, Poet.

*Po. There's as good Poetry in blank Verse, as
Meetre.*

Musick,

*Spr. Come, hay! the Daunce, the Daunce. Nay
we'll ha' the old Couple in, as blind and lame as they
are.*

Bri. What will you so?

Daunce.

Spr. Well hobbled Bridegroome!

Vin. Well grop'd Bride!

Hil. Hay lusty. Hay Holy-day.

*Spr. Set 'hem down; set 'em down: They ha'
done well.*

Gro. A ha! I am lustier than I was 30. yeers ago.

*Bri. And I, than I was threescore past. A hem,
a hemh.*

Vin. What a night here's towards!

Hil. Sure they will kill one another.

Po. Each with a fear the tother will live longest.

*Spr. Poet, thou hast spoken learnedly, and acted
bravely. Thou art both Poet and Actor.*

*Po. So has been many famous men. And if here
were no worse, we might have a Masque, or a Comedie
presented to night, in honour of the old Couple.*

*Vin. Let us each man try his ability
Upon some Subject now extempore.*

*Spr. Agreed. Give us a Theme; and try our Acti-
on.*

Po.

The merry Beggars.

Po. I have already thought upon't. I want but Actors.

Hil. What Persons want you? what would you present?

Po. I would present a Common-wealth; *Utopia*, With all her Branches and Consistencies.

Ra. I'll be *Utopia*; who must be my Branches?

Po. The *Country*, the *City*, the *Court*, and the *Camp*. Epitomiz'd and personated by a *Gentleman*, a *Merchant*, a *Courtier*, and a *Souldier*.

Soul. I'll be your *Souldier*. Am not I one? ha!

Con. And am not I a fashionable *Courtier*?

Po. But who the *Citizen* or *Merchant*?

Spr. I. *Vin.* And I your *Country Gentleman*.

Hil. Or I.

Po. Yet to our Morall I must adde two Persons, *Divinity* and *Law*.

La. Why la you now. And am not I a *Lawyer*?

Po. But where's *Divinity*?

Vin. Mary that I know not. One of us might do that, if either knew how to handle it.

Spr. Where's the old *Patrico*, our Priest, my Ghostly Father? He'll do it rarely.

I Beg. He was telling Fortunes e'ne now to Country Wenches. I'll fetch him--- *Exit.*

Spr. That *Patrico* I wonder at: He has told me strange things in clouds.

Am. And me somewhat that I may tell you hereafter.

Spr. That you shall be my Bride?

Am. I will not tell you now.

Vin. Well: but what must our Speeches tend to? what must we do one with another?

A Jovial Crew: or,

Po. I would have the *Country*, the *City*, and the *Court*, be at great variance for *Superiority*. Then would I have *Divinity* and *Law* stretch their wide throats to appease and reconcile them: Then would I have the *Souldier* cudgell them all together, and overtop them all. Stay, yet I want another person.

Hill. What must he be?

Po. A Beggar.

Vin. Here's enough of us, I think. What must the Beggar do?

Po. He must, at last, overcome the *Souldier*; and bring them all to *Beggars-Hall*. And this, well acted, will be for the honour of our Calling.

All. A Scribble! A Scribble!

Hill. Come, where's this *Patrico*, that we may begin?

Enter Patrico.

Pa. Alack and welladay, this is no time to play. Our Quarter is beset. We are all in the Net. Leave off your merry Glee.

Vin. You begin scurvily.

Spr. Why what's the Matter?

Within. Bing awast, bing awast. The *Quire Cove* and the *Harmanbeck*.

Some Beggars run over the Stage.

Spr. We are beset indeed. What shall we do?

Vin. I hope we shall be taken.

Hil. If the good hour be come, welcome by the grace of good Fortune.

Enter Sentwell, Constable, Watch. The Crew slip away.

Sent. Beset the Quarter round. Be sure that none escape.

Spr.

The merry Beggars.

Spr. Lord to come with you, blessed Master, to a many distressed---

Vin. Hill. Duty and truly pray for you.

Ra. Mer. Good your good Worship, duly and truly, &c.

Sen. A many counterfeit Rogues! So frolick and so lamentable all in a breath? You were acting a Play but now: We'll act with you. Incorrigible Vagabonds.

Spr. Good Master, 'tis a *Holy-day* with us. An *Heire* was married here to day.

Sen. Married! Not so I hope. Where is she? 'Tis for an *Heire* we seek.

Spr. Here She is Master--- Hide your selves in the Straw--the Straw. Quickly into the Straw---

Sen. What tell'st thou me of this? An old blind *Beggar-woman*. We must finde a young *Gentlewoman-Heire* among you. Where's all the rest of the *Crew*?

Con. Slit into the Barn and the Bushes by: but none can scape.

Sen. Look you to that, and to these here.

Exit. with Watch.

Spr. Into the Straw, I say.

Vin. No, good *Springlove*. The Ladies and we are agreed now to draw Stakes, and play this lowlie Game no further.

Hil. We will betaken, and disclose our selves. You see we shall be forc'd to it else. The cowardly Cleark has don't to save himself.

Spr. Do you fear no shame, Ladies?

Ra. Dost think it a shame to leave Begging?

Mer. Or that our Father will turn us out to it again?

Spr. Nay, since you are so resolute, Know, that I

A Jovial Crew: or,

my self begin to finde this is no course for *Gentlemen*. This *Lady* shall take me off it.

Am. Make but your Proteſtations good, and take me yours. And for the Gentleman that ſurprizes us, tho' he has all my Uncles truſt, he ſhall do any thing for me to our advantage.

Vin. If, *Springlove*, thou could'ſt poſt now to thy Tying-houſe, and fetch all our Cloaths, we might get off moſt neatly.

Spr. A Horſe and ſix hours Travell would do that.

Am. You ſhall be furniſht, doubt not.

Enter Sentwell. Watch.

Sent. She's ſcap'd, or is inviſible. You Sir, I take to be the chief *Rogue* of this *Regiment*. Let him be whipt till he brings forth the *Heire*.

Con. That is but till he ſtinks, Sir. Come, Sir, ſtrip, ſtrip.

Am. Unhand him, Sir. What *Heire* do you ſeek, Maſter *Sentwell*?

Sent. Precious, how did my haſt overſee her? O Miſtris *Amie*! Could I, or your Uncle, Juſtice *Clack*, a wiſer man than I, ever ha' thought to have found you in ſuch company?

Am. Of me, Sir, and my company, I have a ſtory to delight you: which on our March towards your Houſe, I will relate to you.

Sent. And thither will I lead you as my Gueſt. But to the Law ſurrender all the reſt. I'll make your peace.

Am. We muſt fare all alike.

Exeunt.

Actus

The merry Beggars.

Actus Quintus.

Clack. Martin.

Cl. I have forgiven you. Provided that my Niece be safely taken; and so to be brought home. Safely, I say, that is to say, unstain'd, unblemish'd, undishonour'd; that is to say, with no more faults, criminall, or accusative, than those she carried with her.

Mar. Sir, I believe---

Cl. Nay, if we both speak together, how shall we hear one another? you believe her Vertue is Armour of proof; without your Councell or your Guard; and therefore you left her in the hands of Rogues and Vagabonds, to make your own Peace with me. You have it. Provided, I say (as I said before) that she be safe, that is to say, uncorrupted, undefiled; that is to say---

Mar. Mine intent, Sir, and my onely way---

Cl. Nay, if we both speak together, how shall we hear one another? as I said before. Your intent, and your onely way, you would ha' said, was to run away with her; and that by her onely Instigation, to avoid the tye of Marriage with Master Talboy; that is to say, to shun the Match, that I had made for her; that is to say, rather to disobey me, than to displease her self. Wherein (altho' she did not altogether transgresse the Law) she did both offend and prejudice me, an Instrument; nay, I may say, a Pillar thereof. And you, in assisting her, furthering, and conveying her away, did not onely infringe the

A Jovial Crew: or,

Law, in an unlawfull Departure from your Master, but in a higher point; that is to say, *Top and top-Gallows high*. I would ha found a Jury should ha' found it so.

Mar. But Sir, an't please you.

Clā. Must we then both speak together? Have I not born with thee, to speak all thou pleasest in thy defence? Have I not broke mine own Rule, which is, to punish before I examine; and so to have the Law the surer o' my side? And dost thou still persist? Hold your own peace; or, as I am a Justice of the Kings, I will unlay what I said before, and set a *Cur-rat Lex* at you, Sirrah, that shall course you up the heavy Hill. Oh, is your Tongue fallen into your Leg now? Do not you know I have acquitted you? Provided As I said before. Go your way in, and see that the Gentlemen, who, I think, were got in *Sack*, christned in *Sack*, nursed with *Sack*, and fed up to gray haire with onely *Sack*; see, I say, that they want no *Sack*. My Son *Oliver* (I thank him) has brought me a pair of such Guests. *Enter Sentwell.*
O Master *Sentwell*! Good News?

Sen. Of beggarly news, the best you have heard.

Clā. That is to say, you have found my Neece among the *Beggars*. That is to say--

Sen. True, Sir *Oliver*, I found her--

Clā. Now if we both speak together, who shall hear one another?

Sen. I thought your desire was to be inform'd.

Clā. I can inform my self, Sir, by your looks. I have taken a hundred Examinations in my daies of Fellons, and other Offendors, out of their very Countenances; and wrote 'em down *verbatim*, to what

The merry Beggars.

what they would have said. I am sure it has serv'd to hang some of 'em, and whip the rest.

Sen. Justice Clack still! He must talk all. His Clack must onely go.

Cla. But to the point. You have found my Neece. You have left her at your own House; not onely to shift her out of her Disguise, but out of her shame, to come neerer me, untill I send her pardon.

Sen. Most true, Sir. But the Company she was in---

Cla. Again! Do not I know the Company? *Beggars, Rogues, Vagabonds, and Hedge-birds.*

Sen. But do you know whom, or how many we have taken? and how the rest escap'd?

Cla. A needlesse knowledge. Why should we take more than her self? Or how could you take those that could escape?

Enter Martin.

Mar. Sir, the old Gentlemen within, sent me to wait upon you. Without you (they say) they need not my Service.

Cla. Tell 'em then, I'll wait on 'em presently.

Exit Martin.

Sen. But Sir, we have taken with her such *Beggars*, such *Rogues*, such *Vagabonds*, and such *Hedge-birds* (since you call 'em so) as you never knew, or heard of, though now the Countries swarm with 'em under every Hedge, as if an innumerable Army of 'em were lately disbanded without Pay. *Hedge-birds* said you? *Hedge Lady-birds*, *Hedge Cavaliers*, *Hedge Souldier*, *Hedge Lawyer*, *Hedge Fiddlers*, *Hedge Poet*, *Hedge Players*, and a *Hedge Priest* among 'em. Such we have taken for the *Principals*. But to see how the mul-

A Jovial Crew: or,

Multitude [scap'd us] was more sport than pitty. How, upon a Watch-word given, they in the instant vanish'd by more severall waies than there were legs among 'em; how the Creeples leap'd over Pales and Hedges; how the Blinde found their way thorrow Lakes and Ditches; how a *Doxie* flew with two Children at her back, and two more, perhaps, in her belly---

Cla. A *Hedge Priest* have you taken, say you?

Sen. Yes, Sir, an old *Patrico*, an ancient Prophet, to tell Fortunes, and cozen our poor Country People of their single Money.

Enter Oliver.

Ol. Sir, Master *Oldrents*, in that he injoyes not your company, begins to doubt of his welcome.

Cla. Who led him into that doubt? I, or you that brought him hither?

Ol. Sir, his own desire, and love to you, brought him hither. I but shew'd him the way.

Cla. You reason fairly. Tell him I come.

Ol. Pray, Sir, be pleas'd to do so: for he saies---

Cla. Nay, if we both talk together---

Ol. Who shall hear one another. *Exit. Oliver.*

Cla. But are there *Players* among the apprehended?

Sen. Yes, Sir. And they were contriving to act a Play among themselves, just as we surpriz'd 'em, and spoil'd their Sport.

Cla. *Players!* I'll pay them above all the rest.

Sen. You shall do well in that; to put 'hem in stock to set up again.

Cla. Yes, I'll put 'em in Stocks, and set 'em up to the Whipping-post. They can act *Justices*, can they? I'll act a *Justice* among 'em; that is to say, I will do

The merry Beggars.

do justice upon them; that is to say---

Sen. Pray Sir, be not severe, they act *Kings* and *Emperours*, as well as *Justices*. And *justice* is blinde they say: you may therefore be pleas'd to wink a little. I finde that you have merry old Gentlemen in your House, that are come far to visit you. I'll undertake that these *Players*, with the help of their *Poet*; in a device which they have already studied, and a pack of Cloaths which I shall supply 'em with, shall give your Guests much content, and move compassion in you towards the poor *Strowler*.

Cla. But you know my way of *Justice* (and that's a sure way) is to punish 'em first, and be compassionate afterwards, as I finde 'em upon their Examination.

Sen. But for your Guests sakes, who (I know) do favour and affect the Quality of Actors very much, permit 'em, Sir. It will enlarge your Entertainment exceedingly.

Cla. And perhaps save me the expence of a Ren-let of *Sack* the while. Well, Sir, for that Respect, and upon your undertaking that they shall please, I will prorogue my *Justice* on the *Rogues*. And so to my merry Gentlemen, whom I will prepare to see their *Enter'nde* against after Supper. But pray, Master *Sentwell*, as you have found my Neece, look to her, and see her decently brought home.

Sen. In her own best Apparell. But you must prorogue your displeasure to her too.

Cla. I will do so, untill my scarce welcome *Guests* be gone.

Enter Randall.

Ran. Sir, my Master sends you word, and plainly,
N
that

A Jovial Crew: or,

that without your Company, your Entertainment stinks. He has commanded me saddle his Nags, and away to night. If you come not at once, twice, thrice, he's gone presently, before Supper; He'll finde an Host at an Inne worth a hundred o' you.

Cl. Good friend, I will now satisfie your Master, without telling him he has a sawcy Knave to his Man. *Exit Clack,*

Ran. Thank your Worship.

Sen. Do you hear, Friend, you serve Master Oldrents.

Ran. I could ha' told you that. And the best House-keeper my Master is of any Gentleman in the County he dwels in; and the best Master to a man, as I, the worst of twenty, can say for him, and would be asham'd to say lesse.

Sen. Your name is *Randall*.

Ran. Forgi' me! Are you so wise? you are too young to be my *Godfire*. And I hope not old enough to be a Witch. How know you, that I am *Randall*? were you ever at my Masters House i' *Nottinghamshire*, or at *Dunghilford*, where I was born?

Sen. No. But I have Notes to know you by.

Ran. I was never twelve mile from thence i' my life, before this Journey. God send me within ken of our own Kitchin smoak again.

Sen. Your Masters Stewards name is *Springlove*.

Ran. Master *Springlove*, an't please you. There is not an honester Gentleman between this and the head of him. And my heart's with him, where e're he is. Know you him too?

Sen. Yes, and your Masters Daughters too.

Ran. Whaw.

Sen.

The merry Beggars.

Sen. And that they are all from home, your Master knows not where.

Ran. Whaw, whaw. Know you that too?

Sen. Yes, and the two young Gentlemen that are with 'em, Master *Vincent*, and Master *Hilliard*.

Ran. Whaw, whaw again. You know 'em all, I think. But know you where they all are?

Sen. Even here by, at my own House.

Ran. Whaw---

Sen. And they knowing that your Master is here, and Master *Hearty* too---

Ran. Whaw, whaw.

Sen. And your self too. They directed me to finde you, *Randall*, and bring you to 'em.

Ran. Whaw, whaw, whaw, whaw.--- Why do we not go then?

Sen. But secretly. Not a word to any body.

Ran. Mum--- Will you go then?

Enter Martin.

Mar. O, Master *Oldrent*'s man. Pray let me in-treat you into the Buttery.

Ran. Will you go, Master *Gentleman*?

Mar. Indeed it is my Masters desire, and he commanded me.

Ran. Now, when it's Supper-time did he? to fill my belly with thin drink to save his Meat? It's the manner in Churls Houses. Will you go, Master *Gentleman*?

Mar. Introth my Master is so merry with yours within---

Ran. Shite o' your Master. My Master's Steward's a better Man. I'll to him, at this Gentleman's House, and all the rest. Whaw, whaw.

A Jovial Crew : or,

Sen. Randall, you forget.

Ran. Mum again then. Why would you not go then ?

Exit Sent. and Rand.

Mar. The man's as mad as his Master. The strangest strangers that ever came to our House.

Enter Talboy

Tal. Well, *Martin*, for confessing thy fault, and the means thou mad'st whereby she is taken, I am friends with thee. But I shall never look upon her, or thee---but with grief of minde, however I bear it outwardly. Oh---

Mar. You bear it very manfully, me thinks.

Tal. I, you think so, and I know so--- But what I feel, I feel. Would one of us two had never both seen one another.---Oh---

Mar. You speak very good sense, Sir. But do's my Master continue his merry humour with the old Gentlemen within.

Tal. Yes. *Justice Clack's* Clack go's as merrily as any.

Mar. Well said, Sir. Now you speak merrily too. But I could say somewhat that would still him. And for your comfort, I'll tell you. *Mist'ris Amie* is fallen in love with one of the *Beggars*.

Tal. Then have I nothing else to do, but to laugh at thee as long as I live. Ha ha ha--- To let a Beggar cozen thee of her. Ha ha ha. A Beggar ! I shall die merrily yet. Ha ha ha.

Enter Clack, Oldrents, Hearty, Oliver.

Cla. A bay Boys, a bay. This is right ; that is to say, as I would have it ; that is to say---

Tal. A Beggar. Ha ha ha---

Mar. Ha ha ha---

Cla.

The merry Beggars.

Cla. A *hay* Boyes, a *hay*. They are as merry without, as we were within. A *hay*, Master *Oldrents*, and Master *Hearty*! The vertue of your Company turns all to Mirth and Melody, with a *hay trololly lolly lolly*. Is't not so, Master *Hearty*?

Old. Why thus it should be: How was I deceiv'd! Now I see you are a good Fellow.

Ol. He was never so before. If it be a Lightning before Death, the best is, I am his Heire.

Tal. Mar. Ha ha ha---

Cla. Again, Boyes, again; that is to say, a *hay* Boyes, ah *hay*---

Hea. What is the Motive of your Mirth, Nephew *Martin*? Let us laugh with you.

Old. Was that spoke like my Friend, *Hearty*? Lack we Motives to laugh? Are not all things, any thing, every thing to be laugh'd at? And if nothing were to be seen, felt, heard, or understood, we would laugh at It too.

Cla. You take the losse of your Mistris merrily, Master *Talboy*.

Tal. More merrily than you will take the finding of her. Ha ha ha--- A *Beggar*! Ha ha ha---

Cla. Can I be sad to finde her, think you?

Mar. He thinks you will be displeas'd with her, and chide her.

Cla. You are deceiv'd, Master *Talboy*; you are wide, Master *Talboy*; above half your length, Master *Talboy*. Law and Justice shall sleep, and Mirth and good Fellowship ride a *Circuit* here to night. A *hay*, Master *Oldrents*, a *hay* Master *Hearty*, and a *hay* Son *Oliver*, and a *hay* Nephew *Talboy*, that should ha' been, and a *hay*, my Cleark *Martin*, and a *hay* for

A Jovial Crew: or,

the *Players*. When come they? Son *Oliver*, see for Master *Sentwell*, that is no *readier* with his new Company.

Tal. Players! Let us go see too. I never saw any *Players*. *Exit Talb. Mar.*

Ol. This is the first fit that ever he had of this Disease. And if it be his last, I say, as I said before. I am his Heire. *Exit.*

Old. But is there a *Play* to be expected, and acted by *Beggars*?

Cla. That is to say, by *Vagabonds*; that is to say, by *strowling Players*. They are upon their Purgation. If they can present any thing to please you, they may escape the Law; that is (*a bay*) If not, to morrow, Gentlemen, shall be acted, *Abuses script and whipt*, among 'em; with a *bay*, Master *Hearty*, you are not merry. *Enter Sentwell.*

And a *bay* Master *Sentwell*, where are your *Drammatic Personæ*; your *Prologus*, and your *Actus Primus*, ha? Ha! they given you the slip, for fear of the Whip? A *bay*.

Sen. A word aside, an't please you.---

*Sentwell takes Clack aside, and gives him
a Paper.*

Old. I have not known a man in such a Humour.

Hea. And of his own finding! He stole it, indeed, out of his own Bottles, rather than be rob'd of his Liquor. Misers use to tipple themselves so.

Old. He do's so out-do us, that we look like staid men again, *Hearty*; fine sober things.

Hea. But how long will it last? He'll hang himself to morrow, for the Cost we have put him to.

Old. I love a Miser's Feast dearly. To see how thin

The merry Beggars.

thin and scattering the Dishes stood, as if they fear'd quarrelling.

Hea. And how the Bottles, to scape breaking one another, were brought up by one at once!

Old. How one of the Serving-men, untrain'd to wait, spilt the White-broth!

Hea. And another, stumbling at the Threshold, tumbled in his Dish of Rouncevals before him.

Old. And most suitable to the Niggardlineffe of his Feast, we shall now have an Entertainment, or Play, presented by *Beggars*.

Cla. Send 'em in, Master *Sentwell*. *Exit Sent.*
Sit Gentlemen, the *Players* are ready to enter. And here's a Bill of their *Playes*. You may take your choice.

Old. Are they ready for them all in the same Cloaths? Read 'em, good *Hearty*.

Hea. First, here's *The two lost Daughters*.

Old. Put me not in minde of the two lost Daughters, I prethee. What's the next?

Hea. *The vagrant Steward*.

Old. Nor of a vagrant Steward. Sure some abuse is meant me.

Hea. *The old Squire and the Fortune-teller*.

Old. That comes neerer me. Away with it.

Hea. *The Beggars Prophecy*.

Old. All these Titles may serve to one *Play*, of a Story that I know too well. I'll see none of them.

Hea. Then here's *The merry Beggars*.

Old. I, that; and let 'em begin.

Enter Talboy and Oliver.

Tal. The *Players* are coming in: And Mistris *Amie* and your man *Martin*, are to be Actors among 'em.

Cla.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Cl. A *hay* then for that too. Some merry device
sure. *A Flourish of Shalms.* Hark! the *Beg-*
gars Hoboys. Now they begin.

Old. See, a most solemn *Prologue.*

Enter Poet for Prologue.

TO Knight, to Squire, and to the Gentiles here,
We wish our Play may with content appear.

*We promise you no dainty Wit of Court,
Nor City Pageantry, nor Country Sport:
But a plain Piece of Action, short and sweet;
In Story true. You'll know it when you see't.*

Old. True Stories and true Jests do seldom thrive
on *Stages.*

Cl. They are best to please you with this tho', or
a *hay* with a Whip for them to morrow.

Old. Nay, rather than *they* shall suffer, I will be
pleas'd, let 'em Play their worst.

*A Flourish. Enter Patrico. With Lawyer
habited like Oldrents.*

See our *Patrico* among 'em.

Hea. That offered you a *Doxie* in the Barn.

Pat. Your Children's Fortunes I have told,
That they shall Beg e're they be old.
And will you have a Reason why?
'Tis Justice in their Destiny.---

Cl. Justice, ha! Are you meddling with *Justices*
already?

Pat. Your Grandfather, by crafty wile
Of bargaining, did much beguile
A thriflesse Heire of half the Lands
That are descended to your hands.

And,

The merry Beggars.

*And, then, by Law, not Equity,
Forc'd Him and his Posterity
To Woe and shamefull Beggary.*

Law. That was no fault of mine, nor of my Children.

*Pat. But our fore-fathers Debts and Crimes,
Although forborn till future times,
Are not so paid. But what needs more,
I wish you happy in your Store.*

Exit.

Old. Dost note this, Hearty?

*Hea. You said you would be pleas'd, let 'em play
their worst.*

*Lawyer walks sadly, beats his breast, &c.
To him enter Souldier like Hearty,
and seems to comfort him.*

*Old. It begins my Story, and by the same Fortune-
teller that told me my Daughters Fortunes; almost
in the same words. I know him now. And he speaks
in the Play to one that personates me, as neer, as they
can set him forth.*

*Cla. How like you it, Sir? You seem displeas'd.
Shall they be whipt yet? A hay, if you say the
word.*

Old. O, by no means, Sir; I am pleas'd.

*Soul. Sad for the words of a base Fortune-teller?
Believe him! Hang him. I'll trust none of 'em.
They have all Whims, and double double meanings
In all they say.*

Old. Whom do's he talk or look like, now?

*Hea. It is no matter whom. You are pleas'd, you
say.*

*Soul. Ha' you no Sack i'th House? am not I here?
And never without a merry old Song?*

O

Sing.

*A Jovial Crew : or,
Sing.*

*Old Sack, and old Songs, and a merry old Crew,
Will fright away Cares when the ground looks blew.
And can you think on Gipsie Fortune-tellers ?*

Law. I'll think as little of 'em as I can.

Soul. Will you abroad then ? But here comes your Steerward.

Enter Springlove to Lawyer.

Old. Blessè me ! Is not that Springlove ?

Hea. Is that you, that talks to him, or that Cockscombe I, do you think ? Pray let 'em play their Play: the Justice will not hinder 'em, you see ; he's asleep.

*Spr. Here are the Keys of all my Charge, Sir. And My humble suit is, that you will be pleas'd
To let me walk upon my known occasions, this Sommer.*

*Law. Fie ! Canst not yet leave off those Vagancies ?
But I will strive no more to alter Nature.
I will not hinder thee, nor bid thee go.*

Old. My own very words at his departure.

Hea. No matter. Pray attend.

Law. Come, Friend, I'll take your Council.

Exeunt Lawy. Sould.

*Spr. I've striven with my self to alter Nature in me,
For my good Masters sake ; but all in vain ;
For Beggars, Cuckoe-like, fly out again,
In their own Notes and Season.*

Enter Rachel. Meriel. Vincent. Hilliard.

*Ra. Our Father's sadnesse will not suffer us
To live in's House.*

Mer. And we must have a Progresse.

Vin. Th' assurance of your Loves hath ingag'd us

Hil. To wait on you in any course.

Ra.

The merry Beggars.

Ra. Suppose we'll go a begging.

Vin. Hil. We are for you.

Spr. And that must be your Course, and suddenly,
To Cure your Father's sadnesse; who is told
It is your Destiny: Which you may quit,
By making it a trick of Youth and Wit.
I'll set you in the way.

All 4. But how? But how?

All talk aside.

(I see

old. My Daughters and their Sweethearts too.
The scope of their *Design*; and the whole drift
Of all their Action now, with joy and comfort.

Hea. But take no notice yet. See a *Whim* more of it.
But the mad *Rogue* that acted me, I must make drunk
anon.

Spr. Now! are you all resolv'd?

All 4. Agreed, agreed.

Spr. You beg to absolve your Fortune, not for need.

Exeunt.

old. I must commend their Act in that. Praythee
let's call 'em, and end the matter here. The purpose
of their *Play*, is but to work my Friendship, or their
Peace with me; and they have it.

Hea. But see a little more, Sir.

Enter Randall.

old. My Man Randall too! Has he a Part with
'em?

Ran. They were well set a work, when they
made me a *Player*. What is that I must say? And
how must I act now? Oh! that I must be *Steward*
for the *Beggars* in Master *Steward's* absence; and tell
my Master, he's gone to measure Land for him to
purchase.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Old. You Sir. Leave the work you can do no better (I can forbear no longer) and call the Actors back again to me.

Ran. With all my heart. And glad my Part is so soon done. *Exit.*

Enter Patrico.

Pat. Since you will then break off our Play :
Something in earnest I must say ;
But let affected *Riming* go.

I'll be no more a *Patrico*.

My name is *Wrought-on*---Start not. But (if you
Desire to hear what's worth your best attention,
More privately) you may draw nearer me.

Oldrents goes to him.

Hea. Hear no more *Fortunes*.

Old. You shall give me leave.

Pat. I am Grandson to that unhappy *Wrought-on*,
Whom your Grandfather, craftily, wrought out
Of his Estate. By which, all his Posterity
Were, since, expos'd to *Beggary*. I do not charge
You, with the least offence in this. But, now,
Come neerer me : for I must whisper to you.

Patrico takes Oldrents aside.

I had a Sister, who among the Race
Of *Beggars*, was the fairest. Fair she was
In *Gentle Blood*, and *Gesture* to her *Beauty* ;
Which could not be so clouded with base *Cloathing*,
But she attracted *Love* from worthy *Persons* ;
Which (for her meannesse) they exprest in *Pity*,
For the most part. But some assaulted her
With amorous, though loose *desires* ; which she
Had vertue to withstand. Onely one *Gentleman*
(Whether it were by her *Affection*, or

His

The merry Beggars.

His *Fate*, to send his Blood a begging with her,
I question not) by her, in heat of Youth,
Did get a *Son*, who now must call you *Father*.

Old. Me?

Pa. You. Attend me, Sir. Your *Bounty*, then,
Dispos'd your Purse to her; In which, besides
Much Money (I conceive by your neglect)
Was thrown this holy *Relique*. Do you know it?

Old. The *Agnus Dei* that my Mother gave me
Upon her Death-bed! O the losse of it
Was my sore grief: And, now, with joy, it is
Restor'd by *Miracle*! Do's your Sister live?

Pa. No, Sir. She died within a few daies after
Her Son was born; and left him to my care;
On whom, I, to this day, have had an eye,
In all his wandrings.

Old. Then the young Man lives!

Enter Springlove. Vincent. Hilliard. Rachell.

Meriel.

Pa. Here with the rest of your fair *Children*, Sir.

Old. My Joy begins to be too great within me!
My Blessing, and a Welcome to you all.
Be one anothers, and you all are mine.

Vin. Hil. We are agreed on that.

Ra. Long since. We onely stood till you shook
off your Sadnesse.

Mer. For which we were fain to go a begging, Sir.

Old. Now I can read the *Justice* of my *Fate*, and
yours---

Cl. Ha! *Justice*? Are they handling of *Justice*?

Old. But more applaud great *Providence* in both.

Cl. Are they jeering of *Justices*? I watch'd for
that.

A Jovial Crew: or,

Hea. I so me thought. No, Sir. The Play is done.

Enter Sentwell. Amie. Oliver. Martin.

Sen. See, Sir, your Neece presented to you.

Springlove takes Amie.

cla. What, with a Speech by one of the *Players*?
Speak, Sir: and be not daunted. I am favourable.

spr. Then, by your favour, Sir, this Maiden is my Wife.

cla. Sure you are out o' your part. That is to say, you must begin again.

spr. She's mine by solemn Contract, Sir.

cla. You will not tell me that. Are not you my Neece?

Am. I dare not, Sir, deny't, we are contracted.

cla. Nay, if we both speak together, how shall we hear one another?

Mar. I must disprove the Contract.

Tal. That is my part to speak.

Sen. None can disprove it. I am witness to it.

cla. Nay, if we all speak---as I said before.

Old. Hear me for all then. Here are no *Beggars* (you are but one, *Patrico*) no *Rogues*, nor *Players*: But a select Company, to fill this House with Mirth. These are my *Daughters*; these their *Husbands*; and this that shall marry your Neece, a Gentleman, my Son. I will instantly Estate him in a thousand pound a yeer to entertain his Wife; and to their Heirs for ever. Do you hear me now?

cla. Now I do hear you. And I must hear you. That is to say, it is a Match. That is to say---as I said before.

Tal.

The merry Beggars.

Tal. And must I hear it too---O---

Old. Yes, though you whine your eyes out.

Hea. Nephew *Martin*, still the Childe with a Suck-bottle of *Sack*. Peace, *Lambe*; and I'll finde a wife for thee.

Old. Now, *Patrico*, if you can quit your Function, To live a moderate Gentleman, I'll give you A competent Annuity for your life.

Pat. I'll be, withall, your faithfull Beadf-man; and Spend my whole life in Prayers for you and yours.

Cla. And now, *Cleark Martin*, give all the *Beggars* my free *Passe*, without all manner of Correction? that is to say, with a *bay get 'em gone*.

Ol. Are not you the Gentleman, that challeng'd me in right of your Friend here?

Vin. Your Inspection's good, Sir.

Ra. And you the Gentleman (I take it) that would have made *Beggar-sport* with us, two at once.

Mer. For twelve pence a piece, Sir.

Oli. I hope we all are Friends.

Spr. Now, on my Duty, Sir, I'll beg no more, But your continuall Love, and daily blessing.

Old. Except it be at *Court*, Boy; where if ever I come, it shall be to beg the next Fool-Royal's place that falls.

Spr. A begging *Epilogue* yet would not be, Me thinks, improper to this *Comedie*.

Epilogue.



Epilogue.

THo' we are, now, no Beggars of the Crew,
We count it not a shame to beg of you.
The Justice, here, has given his Passe free
To all the rest, unpunish'd; onely we
Are under Censure, till we do obtain
Your Suffrages, that we may beg again;
And often, in the Course, We took to day,
Which was intended, for your Mirth, a Play;
Not without Action, and a little Wit,
Therefore we beg your Passe for us and It.

FINIS.
